Jimenez told: Testify vs Erap to delay extradition

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 3

4-day workweek for gov't employees

By Dona Pazzibugan

DON'T be surprised if government employees visit tourist spots this summer in growing numbers. Malacañang is encouraging them to do so.

In Administrative Order No. 32 dated March 18, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a four-day workweek

4-DAY/A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Oil firms hike prices NEWS / A5
- RP wins tourism marketing award NEWS / A5
- Gloria to travel anew next month NEWS / A2

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, March 21, 2002 ★ 48 pages / 3 sections / vol.17 / no. 103 P15 website: www.inq7.net

2,665 US troops arriving

3 countries involved in 'Team Challenge'

By Martin P. Marfil and Juliet L. Javellana

NOT 1,700 but 2,665 US soldiers will take part in the RP-US Balikatan 02-2 set to start next month in Central Luzon, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said yesterday, contradicting the announcement Tuesday of Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan.

Reyes said 10 more military exercises involving US troops would be held this year, although these would be "relatively smaller" than Balikatan 02-1 and 02-2. "All of them are short—two-day, one-week exercises," he said.

But lawmakers expressed alarm at the growing number of US troops coming into the Philippines and raised the suspicion that this could signal the establishment of the country as a US staging ground in the region.

Reyes said there was a US proposal to merge the Balikatan with a larger military exercise that would involve several other countries.

He said the exercise would be called "Team Challenge" and would be spearheaded by the United States, which had been holding exercises with such countries as Australia, Korea and Thailand.

"Now there is a move to have all of these under one exercise and call it Team Challenge," Reyes said at a press conference. "If we have Balikatan form part of the larger exercise, then that will be a foreign policy issue and we might have to discuss that with the Department of Foreign Affairs and eventually seek clearance from the President."

Reyes pointed out that the annual Balikatan was a bilateral, and not multilateral, exercise.

If other foreign troops were to participate in Team Challenge and it would be held in the Philippines, then there would be a need to forge agreements with

2,665/A18

BAR NONE

Rodolfo Ma. A. Ponferrada

Jesus Paolo U. Protacio

Anthony Mark A. Gutierrez

Solomon F. Lumba

Katrina Diane Noelle Monsod

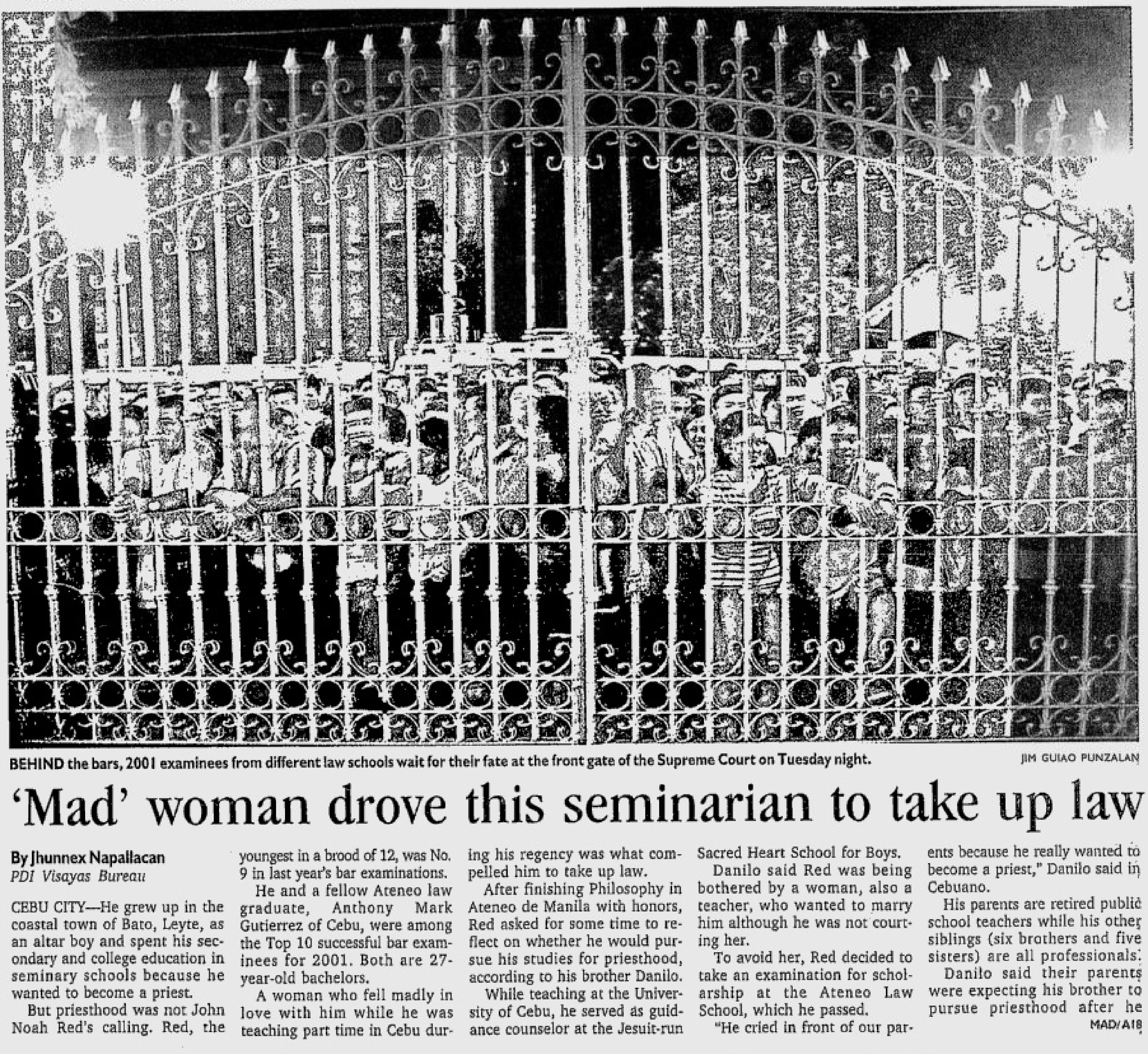
Ma.Theresa U. Ballelos

Amabelle Grace G. Mascardo

Adonis D.V. Gabriel

John Noah M. Red

Dante R. Bravo



BEHIND the bars, 2001 examinees from different law schools wait for their fate at the front gate of the Supreme Court on Tuesday night.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

'Mad' woman drove this seminarian to take up law

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—He grew up in the coastal town of Bato, Leyte, as an altar boy and spent his secondary and college education in seminary schools because he wanted to become a priest.

But priesthood was not John Noah Red's calling. Red, the youngest in a brood of 12, was No. 9 in last year's bar examinations.

He and a fellow Ateneo law graduate, Anthony Mark Gutierrez of Cebu, were among the Top 10 successful bar examinees for 2001. Both are 27-year-old bachelors.

A woman who fell madly in love with him while he was teaching part time in Cebu during his regency was what compelled him to take up law.

After finishing Philosophy in Ateneo de Manila with honors, Red asked for some time to reflect on whether he would pursue his studies for priesthood, according to his brother Danilo.

While teaching at the University of Cebu, he served as guidance counselor at the Jesuit-run Sacred Heart School for Boys.

Danilo said Red was being bothered by a woman, also a teacher, who wanted to marry him although he was not courting her.

To avoid her, Red decided to take an examination for scholarship at the Ateneo Law School, which he passed.

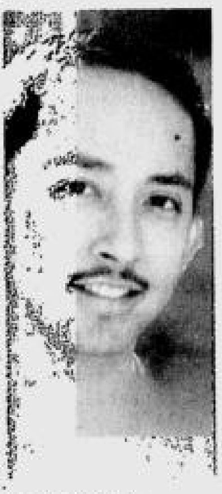
"He cried in front of our parents because he really wanted to become a priest," Danilo said in Cebuano.

His parents are retired public school teachers while his other siblings (six brothers and five sisters) are all professionals.

Danilo said their parents were expecting his brother to pursue priesthood after he

MAD/A18

Young Fil-Am 'rising star in US politics'



RODNEY JAY C.SALINAS: Star power behind the scenes.

By Jennie L. Ilustre
PDI Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON—A Filipino-American has been named one of the "Rising Stars of Politics 2002."

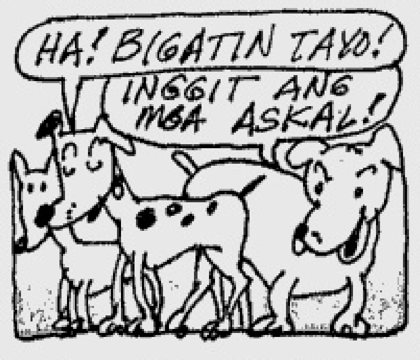
Rodney Jay C. Salinas, 26, is the first known Fil-Am to receive this honor.

According to Campaigns and Elections magazine which yearly selects "rising stars" in American politics, those chosen are important players "who are making their mark in campaign consulting and management, party organization and issue advocacy."

Salinas, president of Rainmaker Political Group LLC and publisher of PoliticalCircus.com, a newsmagazine website, said the honor showed "the growing influence of the Asian-Pacific American community in US politics in new media, public policy, advocacy and elections.

"As important as it is for Asian Pacific Americans to be running for public office,

YOUNG/A4


HA! BIGATIN TAYO!
INGGIT ANG MGA ASKAL!

President's pets commissioned into 'military service'

By Carlito Pablo and Fe Zamora

PRESIDENTIAL guards call them President Macapagal-Arroyo's "other presidential friends." And indeed, they are special.

The special guest at their graduation rites yesterday was the presidential husband himself, Mr. Jose Miguel Arroyo.

PRESIDENT/A18

Fixers making a killing at DFA

By Christine Herrera

IT'S actually a double whammy for passport applicants, who are forced to queue up from dawn to dusk and, in the end, pay exorbitant sums to fixers.

But there is no immediate solution to be expected from the Department of Foreign Affairs. All it can say is: "We cannot do anything about it just yet."

Fixers are making a killing out of the passport shortage, and applicants dismayed at the long queue that starts at midnight at the back of the DFA annex building are easy prey.

According to DFA spokesperson Victoriano Lecaros, fixers employed by travel agencies can victimize as many as 3,000 applicants as early as 2 a.m.

Each applicant is asked to shell out P1,500, or more than double the P650 that

FIXERS/A18

Desierto to Jimenez: Testify vs Erap to delay extradition

By Volt Contreras

THERE'S only one way for Manila Rep. Mark B. Jimenez to delay his extradition to the United States—and that's to testify against deposed President Joseph Estrada.

But Jimenez's testimony against Estrada must be "exhaustive," Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said yesterday.

Desierto, who is prosecuting the plunder case against Estrada in the Sandiganbayan, made the suggestion after FBI Director Robert Mueller pressed President Macapagal-Arroyo for the swift extradition of Jimenez.

Jimenez fled the United States in 1999 after he was indicted in Florida for tax evasion, mail fraud and illegal campaign contributions to the Democratic Party.

"Should he be urgently needed in the

DESIERTO/A4

Second FRONT PAGE

PAYAGAN NA KAYA NGAYON O HINDI?

NEW GROUNDS, NEW PETITION

DOJ seeks live TV trial for Erap

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE GOVERNMENT will again ask the Supreme Court to allow the live coverage of the trial of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada to counter his attacks on the judiciary, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said yesterday.

"We will file a petition anew citing new grounds—the new developments and the statements of the former President that he would not get a fair trial here," said Perez.

Perez also denied that Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. had sent out a media advisory on Tuesday night for a supposed press conference today in which Davide himself would personally answer Estrada's attacks on him.

Perez said Davide had denied ever calling for such a press conference.

False notices

"They are trying to confuse the people by sending false notices," Davide was quoted by Perez as saying.

Perez said he and Davide had spoken at yesterday's regular weekly meeting of the Judicial and Bar Council.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said Estrada had shot himself in the foot when he admitted during a television interview that he had signed his name as Jose Velarde in some bank documents. .

"Now what he is doing is to look for some means to demolish the credibility of the Supreme Court," Ms Macapagal said in Filipino during an interview over Bombo Radyo.

The President said that because of this goof, Estrada has been flailing, first at the Sandiganbayan, which is hearing the plunder and other criminal cases filed against him, and the Supreme Court.

Ms Macapagal said it would be best for everyone to ignore Estrada's tirades.

She said earlier that she would use the full extent of her powers to defend the judiciary from such attacks.

The high court junked the petition for the live coverage of the Estrada trial last year on the ground that it would compromise the fundamental rights of the accused.

It said a public trial was "not synonymous with (a) publicized trial."

But with the recent developments, Perez said the high court should allow the people "to see" the proceedings via television to convince them that Estrada was being treated fairly by the anti-graft court.

Telling by showing

"And there is no better way to tell... than to show," he said.

He said the justice department had no objection to an earlier petition by Ombudsman Aniano Desierto asking the court to allow the public viewing of the recorded proceedings in the Sandiganbayan.

Perez said viewing the videotape of what already transpired in the Sandiganbayan would also allow the public to understand the workings of the judicial process in the country.

Yesterday, Estrada's court-appointed lawyers resigned, saying they could not "intelligently" protect a defendant who had spurned their services.

Estrada had fired his own lawyers, accusing the Sandiganbayan of having already made up its mind to convict him and put him to death.

He also told the court last week that he would not take the legal team appointed for him.

Seeking release

"Without the pertinent records of the case and the cooperation of the accused, we cannot intelligently defend Mr. Estrada," lawyer Prospero Crescini said in a motion filed with the Sandiganbayan.

The motion asked the court to release him and eight other well-known lawyers from their duty of serving as Estrada's defense counsels.

The court made no immediate comment on the pleading.

The media advisory regarding the purported Davide press conference bore the Supreme Court letterhead and was signed by Deputy Court Administrator Ismael Khan.

But Khan, who is the SC spokesperson, is in the United States and is not expected back until next week.

The media advisory said the press conference would be held at the SC at 1:30 p.m. yesterday.

Nobody has claimed responsibility for the false media advisory which said that Davide had called the press conference "to make an important announcement regarding the recent accusations" of Estrada who claimed that the chief justice had lobbied to be appointed to his post.

With a report from Carlito Pablo and AFP

Gloria to travel anew

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday she will make a state visit to Thailand and address meetings in Malaysia and Japan next month.

Ms Macapagal told local journalists Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad has invited her to deliver the keynote speech at the Pacific Basin Economic Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur. She was in Malaysia in August for a state visit.

She did not mention which group she will address in Tokyo late May. She was on a four-day working visit in September in Japan where she obtained pledges of more economic aid from the Japanese government. ***AP***

Benipayo critics meet GMA in Palace dinner

By Blanche S. Rivera

A WEEK after congressional leaders initiated a "reconciliation meeting" between the warring factions of the Commission on Elections, President Macapagal-Arroyo met four Comelec commissioners who are blocking the confirmation of her appointees in the poll body.

The President invited commissioners Luz Tancangco, Ralph Lantion, Rufino Javier and Mehol Sadain to dinner on Monday night.

The poll body has been in a state of conflict since the appointment of Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo last year.

Tancangco, the most vocal critic of Ms Macapagal's appointees--Benipayo, Resurreccion Borra and Florentino Tuason Jr.—said the meeting with the President was "cordial" and did not focus on the perennial infighting in the collegial body.

"It was more of the President just hearing our side. I think that in itself is enough," Tancangco said in a phone interview yesterday.

She said it was difficult to see just yet if the meeting had been fruitful or not.

Tancangco did not divulge details but said she was satisfied because the President did not lay down any conditions for the reconciliation or pressure them into rethinking their position on the confirmation of the three Palace appointees.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, who was among the members of Congress that called for a dialogue with Comelec officials last week, had asked the four commissioners to withdraw their formal opposition to the confirmation of Benipayo, Borra and Tuazon.

The four commissioners rejected Drilon's "suggestion," saying the senator was being unfair.

Tancangco and her allies presented their opposition before the Commission on Appointments on the same day last week.

Tancangco, who used to chair the Comelec's committee on modernization, said the President also did not discuss the highly disputed Voters Registration and Identification System (VRIS), which is the main issue separating the two Comelec factions.

She said the VRIS was "mentioned only in passing" and that the President talked with them about "the Comelec in general as a collegial body."

Tancangco has been harping on Benipayo's supposed tendency to bypass the Comelec en banc and make decisions on his own regarding important matters.

Benipayo and members of the Senate committee on electoral reforms left the country the other day for consultations with migrant Filipino workers on the absentee voting bill now pending in Congress.

The Comelec has declared a Holy Week recess.

Golez: No signs of 4 tons of TNT

By Martin P. Marfil and Norman Bordadora

NATIONAL Security Adviser Roilo Golez said yesterday there was no evidence to show that an international terrorist group was able to smuggle four tons of explosives out of the country.

Golez said arrested terror suspect Indonesian Fathur Roman al-Ghozi was supposed to buy four tons of ammonium nitrate, a bomb component, in the Philippines but was apparently unsuccessful.

"We believe he was not able to get it. But we are not taking chances so we are continuing with our intelligence-gathering efforts," said Golez during a briefing.

Al-Ghozi, who was arrested by military agents on Jan. 15 in Quiapo, Manila, pointed investigators to a cache of weapons and 2,200 pounds of explosives hidden in General Santos City.

The explosives were believed bought in Cebu City and were to be smuggled to Singapore for an attack on US installations there.

But Golez yesterday tried to downplay the report, emphasizing that the four tons al-Ghozi wanted to buy was not TNT but ammonium nitrate.

"This is vastly different... we are talking of substances which the right person could convert into explosives, (mixed) with other commercial (substances). Not four tons of TNT but four tons of ammonium nitrate," he said.

Philippine immigration authorities, however, remain on the lookout for terrorists fleeing the US-led anti-terror campaign in other countries, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

Speaking in a radio interview, the President justified the recent arrest of three Indonesians with suspected links to the al-Qaida network of international terror suspect Osama bin Laden.

With AFP reports

Gov't calls Lenten truce

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered a suspension of offensive military operations against communist rebels for four days during the Holy Week.

The truce would last from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday.

On Tuesday, communist rebel spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal announced that the New People's Army would observe a ceasefire during Holy Week, with or without a similar declaration from the government.

Rosal said the rebels would stop "tactical offensives" in deference to the observance of Holy Week by the country's predominantly Catholic population.

The President said it was a "traditional practice" to declare a temporary truce with communist rebels for the duration of the Holy Week.

As a measure of goodwill, the communists should release the four captives that they were holding, Ms Macapagal said.

The captives are Marine Sgt. Jeremias Rosete, and civilians Pepito Simbulan, Wilfredo Maldazir and Herminia Sorongon. They were all captured in Colombio, Sultan Kudarat, last September and have been accused of spying.

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RANSOM FOR BURNHAMS

Abus want P1M just to start talks

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Abu Sayyaf leader holding American couple Martin and Gracia Burnham hostage demanded a P1-million "acceptance fee" from negotiators before talks could begin, and another P1 million for the freedom of Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap.

Basilan-based Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon made the demands in letters he wrote on March 6 and March 9.

The letters, with no specific addressee, were handed to a local emissary on March 12.

"I received the letters last week (March 12) and I don't know what to do with them because I don't have resources and enough protection to move around," said the emissary who showed the letters, written in Arabic and Filipino, to the INQUIRER.

Hapilon also asked for Globe cellular phone prepaid cards and SIM packs as part of the initial negotiations. He said he made the requests to test the seriousness of any would-be negotiators.

Not serious

He said that in the past, his group had talked to people who, it turned out, were not serious negotiators.

In the second letter, Hapilon mentioned Yap and asked for P1 million for her release.

"*Ang ransom ng nurse ay* P1 million, take it or leave it. *Tungkol naman sa missionaries, humihingi kami ng* P1 million acceptance fee *at mag-usap na lamang tayo sa* cellphone," he wrote.

Hapilon, in the letters, also asked for food, like rice, and personal hygiene products and vitamins.

In Vigan City, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson dismissed reports he was involved in backdoor negotiations for the release of the American missionary couple.

"I deny it. *Wala 'yan* (It's not true.)," Singson told the INQUIRER by telephone yesterday.

Singson had earlier admitted using broadcast journalist Arlyn de la Cruz as a "bridge" to the Abu Sayyaf. But, Singson said, the talks broke down after the bandits asked for ransom.

De la Cruz, a reporter for Net-25 TV, has not been seen since Jan. 19, according to Department of National Defense officials.

But she reportedly called Singson on Feb. 8 to ask for his help, saying she had been abducted and her kidnappers were demanding P40 million for her release. Nothing has been heard from her since.

Julie S. Alipala with reports from Leoncio Balbin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

PAKISTAN DAY RECEPTION

DUE TO UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES THE PAKISTAN DAY RECEPTION BY AMBASSADOR AND MRS. HASAN SARMAD HAS BEEN POSTPONED FROM MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2002 TO TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2002. THE TIMINGS AND VENUE REMAIN UNCHANGED I.E. 6:30 TO 8:00 P.M. AT THE SKYTOP ROOM HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL, MANILA. THE INCONVENIENCE CAUSED IS REGRETTED.

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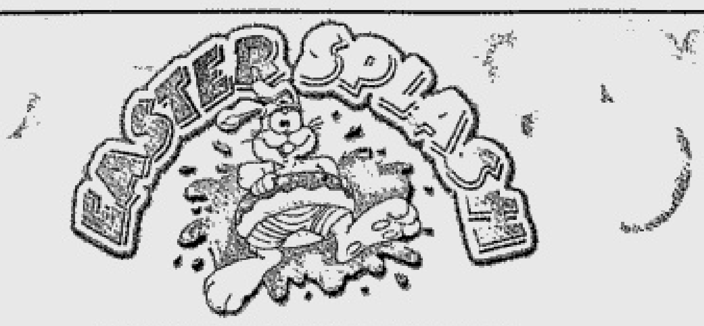

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WIN SOME, LOSE SOME

Filipino political hopes dashed in California

By Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO—Filipino-Americans in California died a thousand deaths when Christopher Cabaldon, their bright hope for a representation in the state's assembly, recently lost his primary race to a veteran politician from Davis.

Cabaldon, who drew support from prominent *kababayans*, area political incumbents, local unions and teacher groups, garnered 10,445 votes to a former mayor, Lois Wolk who got 13,858 votes.

It was the first election defeat for the 36-year-old Filipino-American, a college administrator, council member and mayor of West Sacramento—Sacramento's twin sister across the river.

Filipino-Americans throughout the State had pinned their political aspirations on Cabaldon, whose parents came from the Bicol and Ilocos regions. Cabaldon's defeat dashed his community's desire to send one of its own finally to the capitol's corridors of power.

But political observers in the Fil-Am community said that Cabaldon who'd gotten a taste of big-time politics, could regroup and run again in two years.

Close to a million Filipinos live in California—home to the fifth largest economy in the world and still the bellwether state for the elusive political empowerment of Fil-Ams in America.

Winner

Tom Santos, the only other upper-echelon Filipino candidate in Tuesday's primaries, the first in the US this year, won his race as expected. He will run under the Democratic Party in November against termed-out Republican Assemblyman Bill Leonard for a seat in the Board of Equalization.

Gary Condit loses

Santos has an uphill battle ahead versus Leonard, a powerful Los Angeles-area politician. But then stranger things have happened in California politics.

In Tuesday's elections, Bill Simon, down, 40 points in the polls earlier, sailed to a come-from-behind victory in the Republican gubernatorial primary. He beat former Los Angeles Mayor Dick Riordan to earn the right to face incumbent Democratic Gov. Gray Davis in November.

In another reversal of fortune, 13-term US Congressman Gary Condit, lost to a former aide, Assembly member Dennis Cardoza. Condit was enmeshed in a scandal last year involving a federal intern who disappeared.

Desierto to Jimenez: Testify vs Erap to delay extradition

From page A1

prosecution of a big case in the Philippines, the prosecutors would insist that he give his testimony first," Desierto said.

"That's because the interest of the Philippine justice system must first be served before we honor out international commitments," he added.

Desierto said the prosecution had not yet named Jimenez a state witness. "We're waiting for him to give an exhaustive narrative on what happened in the Estrada administration," he said.

Jimenez was reportedly a leading member of Estrada's "kitchen Cabinet," a group of alleged wheeler-dealers and shady characters.

Estrada once called Jimenez a "corporate genius" after he engineered the Equitable-PCIBank merger and the multibillion-peso sale of telephone giant PLDT to Hong Kong's First Pacific Group.

According to sources, Jimenez could shed light on charges that Estrada amassed billions through kickbacks, commissions, and illegal payoffs during his short-lived tenure. Estrada has denied the charges.

Prosecutors dropped Jimenez as a potential state witness against Estrada when the deposition he had submitted proved insufficient.

In his deposition, Jimenez only admitted contributing P10 million to Estrada's so-called "Jose Velarde account."

Extradition

Estrada's wife, Sen. Loi Ejercitro-Estrada, said Wednesday that she favored Jimenez's swift extradition so he could face the charges against him in the United States.

A militant nongovernment organization also said Congress should expedite Jimenez's extradition to show the international community its respect for the country's extradition treaty with the United States.

The People's Organizations for the Preservation of Laws and Ethical Standards (Peoples) said the House of Representatives, in particular, should not coddle an alleged criminal in its midst.

A high House official, who declined to be identified, earlier said that the chamber would block Jimenez's extradition.

But Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez yesterday said Congress could only stop Jimenez's extradition by abrogating the five-year-old RP-US extradition treaty.

Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II said Jimenez's case involved "a sensitive issue."

On March 18, the Department of Justice filed a petition for Jimenez's extradition in the Manila Regional Trial Court on the basis of a formal US request to the Philippine government.

The justice department has submitted its offer of evidence to the court, and the court is now awaiting Jimenez's offer of evidence.

Jimenez earlier posted a P1-million bail for his temporary liberty. ***With reports by Jerome Aning, Cynthia D. Balana and Christine Avendaño***

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Young Fil-Am 'rising star in US politics'

From page A1

it's equally important for them to be making a difference behind the scenes," said Salinas, who is also a lecturer and commentator.

Nominations for Rising Stars are submitted by US senators, congressmen, governors, other officeholders and by top political consultants and party leaders.

The magazine will feature Salinas and the other awardees in its April issue. At press time, the complete list was not yet available.

A special reception will be held on April 5 at the Washington Marriott Hotel in this US capital. The reception kicks off Campaigns and Elections magazine's Annual Campaign Training Seminar and Trade Show.

Star power

Salinas joins the magazine's previous awardees, the likes of top presidential strategists James Carville, George Stephanopolous, Mary Matalin, Mike McCurry and Alexis Herman, who later became labor secretary.

Carville, a Democrat, helped Bill Clinton win the presidency, coining the famous "It's the economy, stupid" motto in that campaign.

Carville's then fiancée Matalin, a Republican, worked for President George H. W. Bush's 1992 reelection campaign against Clinton. She's now Vice President Dick Cheney's media strategist.

Stephanopolous, now an ABC-TV political analyst, was Carville's cerebral partner in Clinton's campaign. McCurry was Clinton's press secretary.

When the news about Salinas spread yesterday, the Filipino-American community did a collective "high five" via e-mail, the phone and at the office water cooler.

All agreed that Salinas had the potentials to become a top elected official someday, given his sterling background in advocacy, civic work and publishing.

Rod Garcia, former Philippine American Bar Association president, urged Salinas to "take the next step." Rodney plans to run for public office someday. Among his role models are Asian-American officials like Washington Gov. Gary Locke and West Virginia State Delegate Jon Amores.

Currently, Salinas is serving a three-year term on the Human Rights Commission for the city of Alexandria, Virginia, where he lives. The mayor and the city council appointed him to that post last year.

"I'm so pleased that Rodney Salinas has been recognized as a Rising Star in politics," Filipino-American Irene Bueno told the INQUIRER.

Bueno is a former special assistant to President Clinton on domestic policy and now president of Bueno Strategies LLC, a consulting firm in this capital city.

She added: "Rodney has truly been a leader in the Asian-Pacific American community and deserves this award. I expect that he will continue to be a force not only in the Asian-Pacific American political scene but also in mainstream national politics."

Website

Last year, Salinas and his friends formed PoliticalCircus.com, an innovative online magazine that promotes Asian-American participation in mainstream politics. The website has quickly grown to over 1,800 email subscribers.

Yahoo! Internet Life Magazine named the website "New, Notable and Fun." The website has been featured in Newsbytes News Network, a division of The Washington Post. AboutPolitics.com named it Political Site of the Day.

On a daily basis, volunteer editors in Chicago, Los Angeles and Boston help Salinas keep PoliticalCircus.com current and exciting. Among its features are "On the Ballot," an update on Asian-Americans running for public office across the country; Daily News; Ringleader of the Week, featuring an elected Asian-American official; and Polls on current issues and events.

"Our goal is to be of public service, and we wanted visitors to concentrate on our contents and not be distracted by pop-up ads," said Salinas. "So in lieu of ads, we asked visitors for a small donation, like $1 to $3."

The group raised over $600, enough to cover the initial expenses of creating and maintaining the website. In a few months, the website attracted 1,400 subscribers. According to Salinas, it has recorded over 10,000 page visits a week.

Role model

"Rodney is an inspiration to any young person aspiring to help the community through political involvement," said Paul Tiao, cofounder and executive director of the Asian-American Action Fund, a non-partisan political action committee located in this capital city.

In 1999, Salinas served for close to a year as executive director of the Asian-Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS).

Founded in 1995, APAICS is a non-partisan group that aims to increase the participation of Asian-Americans in public policy and political process. It collects data, informs Asian-Americans on the legislative agenda and conducts seminars on running for public office, including how to raise funds. It also provides summer internships in the capital city.

As APAICS executive director, Salinas promoted the political empowerment of the Asian-Pacific American community. He delivered speeches in over 25 major cities and over 40 colleges and universities across the country. He left APAICS to start his political website.

Commentator

Salinas is also a political commentator for several newspapers and radio programs, including Pacific Time on KQED Radio and Manila Bulletin USA. A member of the American Association of Political Consultants, he is a frequent lecturer on Asian-American political issues.

Salinas earned his master's degree from the Graduate School of Political Management while on a full scholarship as a Presidential Administrative Fellow at George Washington University in this city.

He is the eldest son of Dannie Salinas, a retired navy chief petty officer, and wife Trinidad, a nurse. His parents live in New Jersey, located less than 300 miles north of this city.

4-day workweek for gov't employees

From page A1

for government employees for April and May to encourage domestic tourism.

Government employees can opt not to work on Mondays or on Fridays. But they must put in not less than 10 hours of work a day, exclusive of meal periods. They must also report for work four consecutive days a week, from Tuesday to Friday or from Monday to Thursday.

The President is encouraging Congress and the judiciary to adopt her idea.

It was Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon who recommended the four-day workweek this summer. Gordon said that the four-day workweek would not result in reduced wages for casual government employees as they would still be putting in 40 hours by working 10 hours a day.

The President is encouraging government employees to visit the country's tourist sites during their three-day weekend. The country needs to boost domestic tourism since it is a major source of economic activity, according to the President.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) has said that "employees can use the extra day to bond with their families while appreciating what our country has to offer in terms of leisure and cultural experiences by visiting museums, churches, parks and beaches in their home provinces."

The DOT said the shorter workweek offered other benefits—reduced stress and less traffic congestion.

Under AO 32, heads of each agency or department are ordered to ensure that at least half of their employees report on Mondays and the other half report on Fridays.

Agency heads were also told to ensure that they have a complete workforce on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Not covered by the four-day workweek are government agencies involved in providing health, safety, police, security, protection and other emergency services.

For Holy Week, in keeping with her stress on domestic tourism, Ms Macapagal declared Holy Wednesday a non-working day but only for government employees. She declared Black Saturday a non-working holiday for workers in the public and private sectors.

RP wins tourism marketing award

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES won the Best Overall Marketing Effort Award in the recently concluded Internationale Tourismus Borse (ITB), the annual tourism fair in Berlin, Germany.

The Philippines beat over 1,000 entries from 199 countries and territories to win the award, which was presented to Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon by officials of the Pacific Asia Tourism Association.

Last year, the Philippines won the Best Booth Award at the same travel fair.

The ITB ran from March 16 to 20 and was attended by 120,000 visitors from all over the world. About half that number were people connected to the travel and tourism industries.

Speaking from Berlin, Gordon said the Philippines made "a very good impression" on the participants and visitors at the fair.

He said he was "confident this would translate to increased tourism arrivals in the country next year."

Gordon said the Philippine delegation made a strong impression at the fair with its "varied and innovating marketing activities."

The delegates pasted colorful posters on Berlin's buses, placed ads in major international networks like CNN and BBC, and hosted a reception that featured Filipino entertainers led by Gary Valenciano.

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Oil firms hike prices

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PETROLEUM product companies yesterday increased wholesale prices of gasoline by 35 centavos per liter and of diesel and kerosene by 30 centavos, with Caltex making the first move late Tuesday.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum, Petron, Flying V and TotalFinaElf said they had moved to match Caltex's price changes at different times yesterday.

Seaoil Petroleum said it would be doing the same but its increased prices would not be effective until tomorrow at 6 a.m.

"We expect the stock that we bought at less cost to last until Friday," said Seaoil Petroleum president Glenn Yu.

Eastern Petroleum, meanwhile, increased the prices of its gasoline by 45 centavos per liter and of diesel by 40 centavos.

Eastern Petroleum chair Fernando Martinez, however, said the firm's pump prices were still lower by 5 centavos per liter than those of the Big Three—Petron, Shell and Caltex.

The companies cited the rising trend in world crude prices for the latest increase.

Average prices of the benchmark Dubai crude hit $19.02 per barrel in February, up by $0.54 from $18.48 in January.

Prices went up further to $22.47 per barrel in the first 19 days of March.

The peso in the meantime gained 11 centavos. From P51.39 to the dollar in January, the rate stood at P51.28 against the dollar last month.

An industry source, noting that members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have decided to keep daily production at current levels, warned that crude prices could go up further with the expected rise in global demand.

Last month, the private-sector Consumer and Oil Price Watch insisted that prices should not increase this month as the oil firms still had a buffer fund of 31 centavos per liter.

"There should be a hike of 18 centavos per liter in March, but the oil firms would still owe consumers," Raul Concepcion, the head of the watchdog body, said.

Obet calls for 'coop revolution' in book

FORMER Bulacan Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan is calling for what he describes as a "cooperative revolution" that will launch a "peaceful systemic reforms and structural engineering to strengthen our democratic way of life."

He is making the call in his book, "An Urgent Call For A Cooperative Revolution," which is scheduled to be launched today at the Megatrade Hall 1 of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. The launching at 10:30 a.m. coincides with the opening ceremonies of the 2nd Cooperatives and SMEs Trade Fair.

Pagdanganan said that in order to win the war against poverty, it is not enough to create wealth; it is more important to ensure equitable distribution of that wealth. Cooperatives have a crucial role to play in carrying this out, he said.

"If the few elite continue to have much too much and majority of the poor much too little, we may be faced with tragic consequences that are too depressing to even contemplate," he said.

Pagdanganan is the current chair of the Philippine Cooperative Center (PCC), which boasts of nationwide membership of cooperatives.

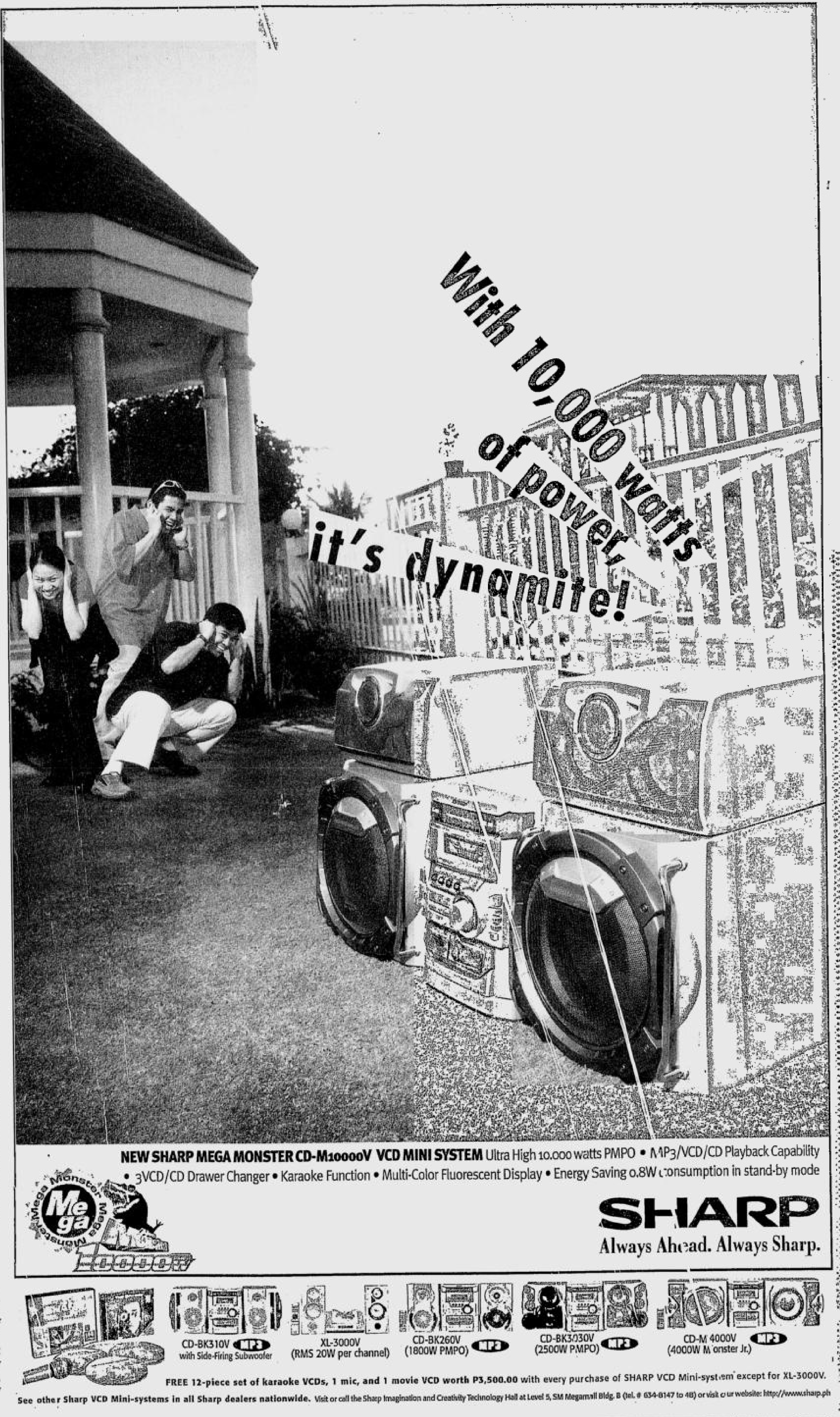
The book is actually an updated version of his first book, "Call for Cooperative Revolution," which was published in 1999 to serve as "a wake-up call to address the worsening social exclusion of the vast majority of our population."

The author, who is credited with making Bulacan the country's cooperative capital during his three terms as governor, explained in his book that although cooperatives are not the panacea of all social ills, "they are effective in increasing people's propensity to save (and thus create capital).

Art raffle number

THE CONTACT number for those interested in participating in the art raffle sponsored by St. Theresa's College-Manila High School Class of '78 is 890-2824, care of Dr. Joji Tan.

The raffle, to be held at the Avellana Art Gallery on March 23, will feature artworks by top Filipino painters like Malang, Ang Kiukok, Danny Dalena, Alan and Ivi Cosio, Impy Pilapil, and others.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Scrapping of cement tariff assailed

THE TARIFF Commission came under heavy fire yesterday from cement manufacturers, workers and consumers for allegedly "acting against the national interest" by junking the tariff imposed on imported cement and threatening the demise of the local cement industry.

The Fair Trade Alliance (FTA) branded the scrapping of the P20.60 tariff, representing 20.6 percent slapped on each bag of imported cement as "the death knell for the local cement industry."

"Such tariff wall is legitimate and consistent with the Safeguard Measures Act (Republic Act No. 3800) and even the rules of the World Trade Organization," the FTA said.

Construction workers under the Balikatan ng Manggagawa sa Konstruksyon (Balikatan) and consumers under the Citizens Alliance for Consumer Protection (CACP) said the Tariff Commission's move undermined the interest of the consumers and construction industry workers.

In a press statement, they blasted the commission for being "insensitive to the plight of Filipino workers since it acted as the godfather to unbridled cement dumping here."

Former Sen. Wigberto Tañada, former Agrarian Secretary Horacio Morales, Jimmy Regalario of Katapat, militant labor unions and business leaders have banded together to oppose the junking of the protective tariff.

Anti-Filipino

Branding the commission's move as "unabashedly anti-Filipino and anti-labor," CACP president Raul Segovia said the ruling implies that the commission prefers to protect foreign labor at the expense of Filipino workers.

"The (commission), in effect, advocates the unfettered opening of the Philippine market without any regard for the survival of the Filipino worker, and even belittles the capacity of Filipino labor," Segovia said.

He urged Trade Secretary Mar Roxas to reject the commission's decision, saying it will only allow the continued influx into the country of imported cement, which the CACP head said has never benefited Filipino consumers.

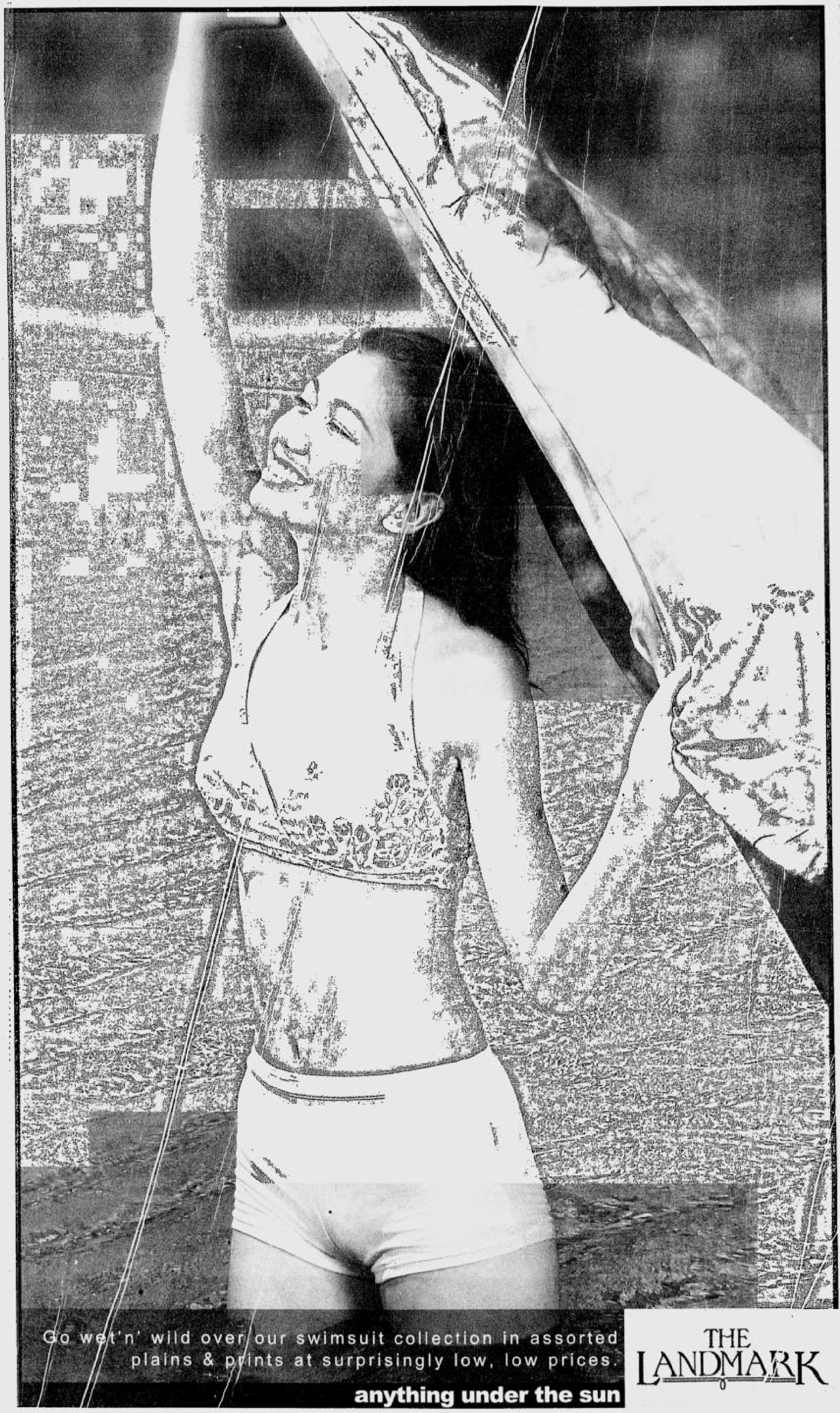
The commission announced the removal of the tariff last week just as Roxas expressed disappointment over the trade and non-trade barriers imposed against Philippine export products abroad.

The trade secretary had imposed a provisional P20.60 per bag, tariff on imported cement, but the Tariff Commission overturned this and removed the protective tariff.

FTA stressed that Edgardo Abon, who heads the Tariff Commission, has no business protecting the interest of the major cement importers who employ less than 100 workers over the interest of a local industry that invested $2.8 billion for modernization in 1988 alone and now employs more than 35,000 workers.

The alliance stressed that Abon and his commissioners were quibbling when they claimed no serious injury was felt by the local cement makers when the market share of imported cement rose to 21 percent.

Tañada, Morales, Regalario and other alliance leaders said that because of unmitigated imports since 1998, four cement makers—Mindanao Portland Cement Corp., Titan Cement, Rizal Cement and Lloyds Richfield Corp.—either stopped operations or were compelled to shut down their plants, to the detriment of 23,400 workers and their dependents.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THE LANDMARK

Execution for death cons, castration for rapists

By Rocky Nazareno and Cynthia D. Balana

IT was not a good day for death convicts.

Yesterday, administration Sen. Robert Barbers strongly batted for the revival of executions of death convicts, while opposition Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada filed a bill mandating castration for those convicted of rape or child molestation.

"If we execute these criminals at the rate of one or two per month, this will definitely be a strong deterrent to the commission of heinous crimes. It will make criminals have second thoughts because this will prove the government is serious in its drive to rid society of criminal elements," Barbers said.

Barbers noted that since the enactment of the Death Penalty Law in December 1993, there have been only two criminal executions. As such, he said criminals are "challenging the capability of the government to implement the DPL."

The abolition of the Death Penalty Law has suddenly become an issue after 14 senators recently filed a bill to repeal it. They argued the law is inhumane and does not adhere to the morals of a civil society. Other quarters saw it as a move to try to save the life of Senator Estrada's husband—deposed President Joseph Estrada—who is facing a plunder charge that merits the death penalty upon conviction.

Senator Estrada, on the other hand, filed Senate Bill 2053 advocating castration as a penalty given the alarming increase in rape and other sexual offenses.

"In fact, with surprisingly little fanfare, four states in the US passed recently laws calling for castration—either chemical or surgical—of sex offenders," Estrada said.

She said the states—among them, Florida, California and Montana—have enacted more stringent laws to order the involuntary chemical or surgical castration of criminals.

Other countries that practice castration are the Czech Republic and Germany.

"The technology for castration has evolved considerably, and there is evidence that, in some circumstances, it can dramatically reduce the likelihood the sex offender will strike again," Estrada said.

She said research has produced powerful drugs, such as cyproproterone and medroxyprogesterone, which reversibly block testosterone production.

The drugs' primary use in man is to control prostate cancer, but when injected daily or weekly, they reduce testosterone to castration levels.

Surgical castration, or orchiectomy, is less mutilating than it once was. Estrada said orchiectomy is a day-surgery procedure done under local anesthesia. Each testicle is removed through a small scrotal incision similar to the kind made during a vasectomy.

In the US, castration laws are enforced with some variations.

Estrada said that Florida requires judges to impose either injections or orchiectomy on repeat rapists.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 21, 2002
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Gen 17:3-9
Gospel: Jn 8:51-59

Jesus said to the Jews, "Truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never experience death." The Jews replied, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died and the prophets as well, but you say: 'Whoever keeps my word will never experience death.' Who do you claim to be? Do you claim to be greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets also died."

Then Jesus said, "If I were to praise myself, it would count for nothing. But he who gives glory to me is the Father, the very one you claim as your God, although you don't know him. I know him and if I were to say that I don't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I know him and I keep his word. As for Abraham, your ancestor, he looked forward to the day when I would come; and he rejoiced when he saw it."

The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" And Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." They then picked up stoned to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple.

Commentary

Matthew, Mark and Luke's gospels all have a story where Jesus asks, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mt 16:17) John's gospel has a more in-depth treatment of the theme of Jesus' identity. John leaves us in no doubt about the Church's faith in the divine nature of Christ, for "I am" is the name of God. To keep the word of Jesus is to keep the word of God. Something unbelievably wonderful is offered in Jesus—a path to union with the Author of Life. It is no exaggeration to claim, as Jesus does here, that earthly death cannot touch the being of one who is united with God.

"Whoever listens to my words and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life." (Jn 5:24)

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Bishop says nation's woes are self-inflicted

By Armand N. Nocum

THE COUNTRY is bearing the heavy cross of imagined, sensationalized, and self-inflicted woes and wounds.

The head of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines made this observation as he called on the government, the opposition and the media to stop elevating petty issues into a national crisis.

In a column at the CBCP official paper, CBCP President Orlando Quevedo said that although Holy Week calls on people to share the sufferings of Christ, the country's hardships result "from an agony of our own making."

"Pettiness, making mountains out of molehills, confrontation over trivia, sensationalizing the insignificant—these are some of our problems as a nation," Quevedo said in his Holy Week reflections at the "CBCP Monitor."

He cited the brouhaha created by President Macapagal's image-makeover to woo support from the poor.

The move, he said, immediately came under fire from those who accuse her of allegedly stealing ousted President Estrada's supporters.

"Criticism about this change fills the front pages for several days," he said. "Whatever good she does for the country is automatically suspect. She is damned if she does, damned if she doesn't. Because of this crab mentality, the nation suffers."

An honest mistake, not a lie–Alvarez

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Heherson Alvarez, replying to accusations of a dismissed environment official, said he did not lie when he presented a witness at a hearing of the congressional Commission on Appointments vetting his appointment.

He challenged Peter Abaya, the dismissed chief of the Environmental Management Bureau, to address the charges, which led to his relief instead of bringing up accusations.

Abaya, in a statement to the CA hearing his opposition to Alvarez's confirmation, said Alvarez had lied when he allegedly misrepresented witness Dr. Michael E. Nuñez as a Stanford University Ph.D. graduate at the Feb. 13 hearing of the CA.

"There was no perversion of truth," Alvarez said.

Second lie

"It was an honest mistake. There was no intent to mislead the CA or commit perjury because the person being introduced was beside me then," Alvarez said.

Nuñez himself corrected Alvarez when he stood up to speak, saying he earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Safety and Health from the Western States University in Missouri.

Abaya said Alvarez lied a second time when he denied having hired Nuñez as a consultant at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

He presented a special order from Alvarez dated July 23, 2001 designating Nuñez as team leader of the composite hazardous materials (Hazmat) and geologic/hydrogeologic assessment teams that are investigating the proposed Tiwi solid waste injection project of the Tiwi Geothermal Plant in Albay.

Alvarez denied that he lied when he said Nuñez was never a consultant. He said Nuñez was a mere technical volunteer to the Hazmat team.

"He was not paid a single peso and was never issued a contract for that project," Alvarez said.

Nuñez was a technical adviser to the Philippine Ozone Desk from 1996 to 1998 when Victor Ramos was environment secretary.

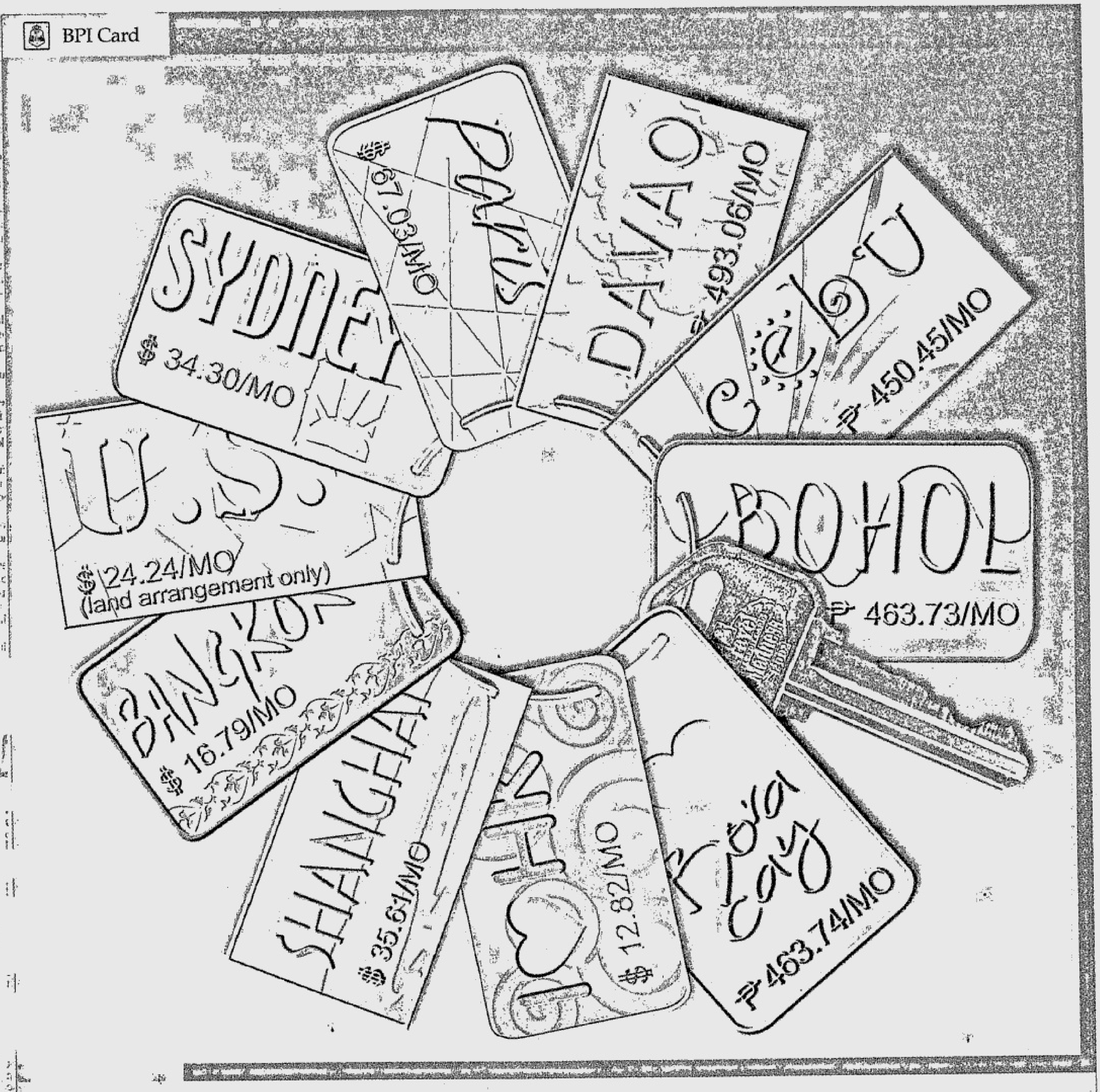
Fly-by-night

Alvarez lamented that Abaya was raising "irrelevant issues" instead of addressing the charges against him, particularly his issuance of permits for the importation of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the year 2000 to alleged "fly-by-night" companies, one of which had been found not to have any registration records at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Last September, Alvarez charged Abaya with grave misconduct after an initial investigation found prima facie evidence that he gave import permits to eight new firms to bring in CFC, a refrigerant already banned worldwide under the Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances.

Alvarez said Abaya was also reportedly involved in the granting of six so-called "midnight" environmental compliance certificates which "he was said to have hand-carried" to the then Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles.

Alvarez said he had already recalled two of the ECCs—one for the Pulupandan coal power plant in Negros and the other for the Boac River rehabilitation project affected by the Marcopper mine spill disaster in 1996. He said the rest—the Clark sanitary landfill, the soil remediation program for the toxic wastes at the Rockwell Land in Makati, the Samal Island tourism project, and a 18-hole golf course project in Cabanatuan City—were under investigation.



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Sovereign commitment

EDITORIAL

THE DIRECTOR of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert Mueller, did not waste time or words when he raised with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo last Monday the US request for a swift extradition of Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

"I raised with President Macapagal-Arroyo our desire to have him extradited expeditiously—under the legal procedures in the Philippines," Mueller said. To make sure everyone knew how serious the US government was, he later told the press: "We want Mr. Jimenez extradited expeditiously back to the US to face charges. The extradition of Mr. Jimenez is important to us."

The Department of Justice filed on March 18, 2001, three months after the fall of the government of former President Joseph Estrada, who protected Jimenez, a petition for extradition in response to the request of the US government. That's how important the case is to the United States and how seriously it views the extradition treaty. Jimenez faces criminal charges of tax evasion, wire fraud conspiracy and illegal contribution to the presidential campaign of former President Bill Clinton.

The impatience of the US government over the delay in the extradition process in this country is reflected in Mueller's statement that while the extradition process has to be worked out within the judicial systems of the two countries, "it is necessary to assure that those who break the law are brought to justice and brought to justice swiftly."

The new US demand follows frustrating delays which allowed Jimenez to evade extradition even though the Supreme Court has ruled that implicit in the treaty is an "unbending commitment" that neither governments will "coddle criminals." Indeed, the Regional Trial Court of Manila, following the Supreme Court's ruling, issued a warrant for Jimenez's arrest on July 3, 2001, but Jimenez posted bail for P1 million.

After using the Philippine judicial system to avert extradition, Jimenez sought sanctuary inside the political system by getting himself elected congressman, representing the sixth district of Manila. The idea obviously was to cloak himself with parliamentary immunity.

The Jimenez case is a test case for the extradition treaty. Specifically, it is a test of whether we can live up to the standards of extradition cases which require an expeditious process.

Since the fall of Estrada, Jimenez, who was once described by the former president as a financial genius for his ingenuity in brokering deals from which Estrada is reported to have gained financially, has switched sides. He has entered into a cozy co-existence with the Macapagal administration and has been photographed with the President in some projects for the poor in Manila. He has testified on some of the shady deals of his former patron and apparently this has paid off. The DOJ is apparently not too keen about considering the US demand with a sense of urgency. Justice Secretary Hernando Perez reminded Mueller that Jimenez is protected by the Bill of Rights, which Perez noted was an American transplant into the Philippine Constitution.

Perez and Mueller are not talking about the same things. The issue is the extradition of Jimenez, and Perez is apparently defending his attempt to delay and evade the process, including the political maneuvers. The growing public suspicion that the Macapagal administration has struck a deal with Jimenez in exchange for dragging the case is being confirmed by the apparent coddling of Jimenez by the justice department.

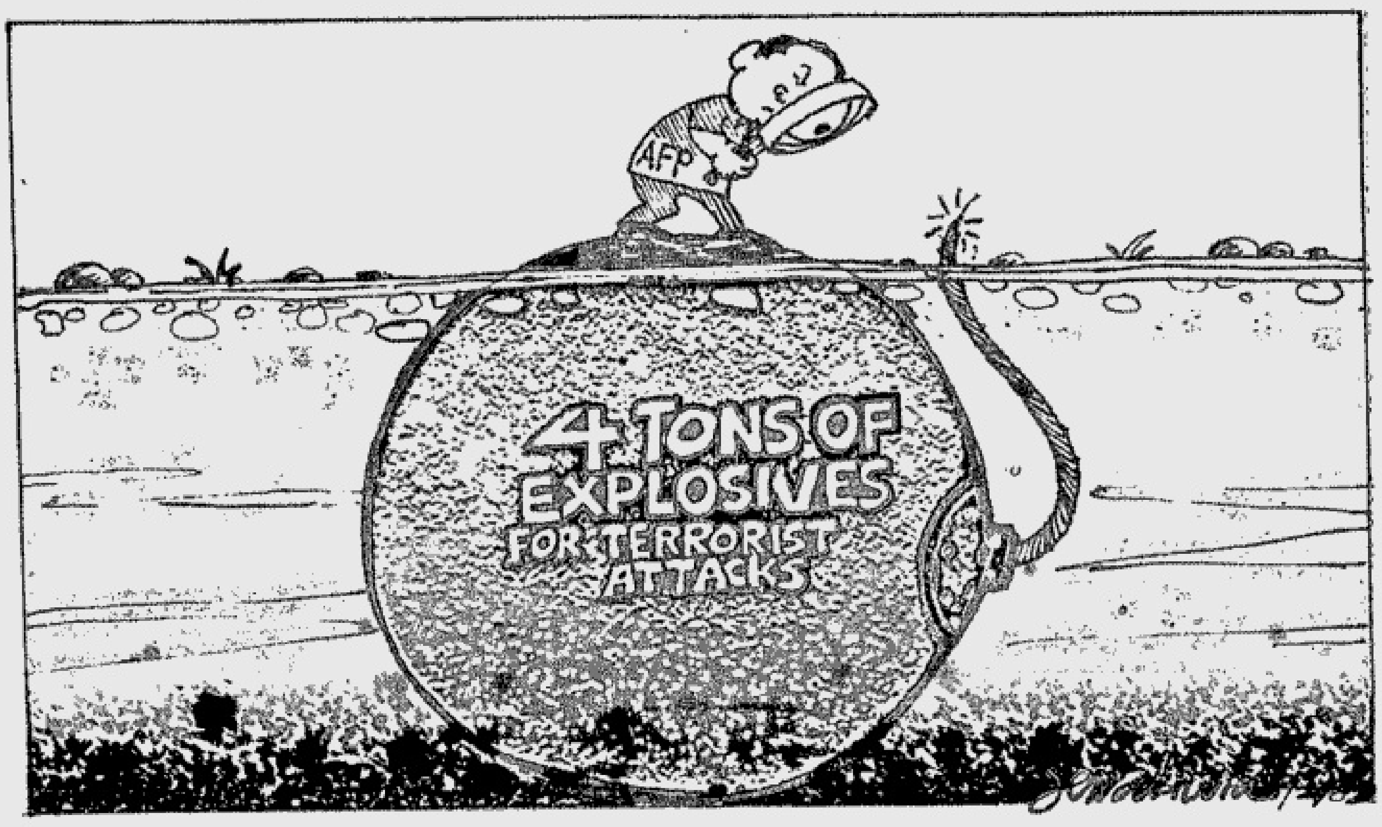
The House of Representatives is divided over whether Jimenez has immunity from arrest and extradition. Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez argues that Congress cannot block extradition. Jimenez, he points out, faces criminal charges which are not covered by parliamentary immunity.

But Jimenez has a lot of friends in the House who have come to his aid partly out of parliamentary camaraderie—another word for cover-up. One congressman has warned of a constitutional crisis if Jimenez were to be extradited.

How a crisis could develop over Jimenez is beyond us. But count on members of Congress to entertain absurd notions.

Congressmen should take international treaties seriously as a sovereign commitment. Treaties are not municipal ordinances.

Jimenez has responded to demands for extradition by stepping up his so-called acts of charity for the poor. Charitable works, unfortunately, do not settle criminal cases. Jimenez has to answer the charges against him, and the administration must stop coddling him and make the treaty work.


AFP
4 TONS OF EXPLOSIVES FOR TERRORIST ATTACKS

A fate worse than death awaits smokers

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SMOKERS, hear this: Dying of lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, or stroke—all of which can be caused by smoking—is not the most horrible punishment for this vice. Neither is it the long, agonizing death throes—although lung cancer kills within six months after discovery.

The most horrible punishment is this: Smoking causes impotence. It decreases sexual appetite; it causes erectile dysfunction.

If this doesn't scare the men, nothing else will. And that justifies the nagging wives give their husbands to stop smoking.

At the health forum of the Philippine College of Physicians and Mirror Magazine last Tuesday, pulmonologists (doctors specializing in diseases of the lungs) explained why smoking causes impotence. Nicotine constricts the blood vessels so that less blood can flow through them. That is why it sometimes triggers strokes and heart attacks. The same nicotine also constricts the blood vessels to the penis. It is blood that floods the tissues of the penis that causes it to become hard and erect. If less blood passes through the constricted blood vessels, naturally blood cannot engorge the penis and it can't do its work. Result: a fate worse than death. No more happy days and nights for the macho male. In fact, the magic of Viagra, the sex-enhancing pill, is to increase blood flow to the penis. Smoking is like an antidote to Viagra.

The doctors, members of the Philippine College of Chest Physicians, also noted that the Clean Air Act, which bans smoking in public places, is being wrongly implemented. To comply with the law, most restaurants have "Smoking" and "No Smoking" sections. Movie houses and shopping malls usually have smoking lounges. Passenger aircraft also have "Smoking" and "No Smoking" sections. They think this is enough. Wrong.

The smokers and non-smokers, although sitting in different sections, still sit in the same enclosed space. The cigarette smoke in the smoking section also circulates in the nonsmoking section and the people there inhale the invisible toxic gases that the smokers spew out.

To fulfill its function, the doctors said, the smoking lounge should be outside, in the open air, or in a separate closed area away from the rest of the restaurant, movie house, or mall. Of course, in the case of airplanes, it would be impossible to have an open-air smoking lounge or a cabin separate from the no-smoking cabin. The solution to that is to ban all smoking in airplanes and provide smokers with cigarette substitutes such as nicotine candies and patches while in flight.

But the best way, the doctors said, is never to start smoking. Because once you acquire the habit, it is very difficult to stop. It is very hard to quit cold turkey, and without expert help.

So you already are a smoker and want to quit, what do you do? You can go to the Lung Center or to other hospitals with "Smoking Cessation" units. The doctors there will teach you, and help you, for free, how to quit smoking. All they ask of you is to provide the will power.

* * *

Still on sex (we have to get this subject over and done with before the Holy Week), do you know that smut—pornographic tabloids and magazines—are flooding the streets of Metro Manila and other urban areas? So much money can be earned from smut that publishers keep adding new titles. As of last count, there were 32 titles for homosexuals and 28 for heterosexuals. The National Movement Against Pornography, which guested at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday, brought some copies to show how low the smut publishers have become.

These publications are not the usual girlie magazines like Playboy. They are hard-core pornography, shocking even to the jaded machos. The magazines for gays have titles like "Footlong" and "11 Inches" and featured, on their covers, color photos of nude studs displaying their foot-long or 11-inch appendages. Inside are more photos of studs, of fellatio and cunnilingus, of different positions of the sex act, and extreme close-ups of the so-called "private parts" (but no longer private) in action.

Smut publishers use "freedom of the press" to shield themselves against arrest and prosecution. But no way can you justify these pornographic publications as "freedom of the press."

Unfortunately, the National Movement Against Pornography (NMAP) is just an organization of civilians who have no power or authority to seize smut publications and arrest their publishers and sellers. That job falls on the government, specifically the police and the local government units (LGUs). Do you know who is the national chair of the National Movement Against Pornography? Why, none other than Interior Secretary Joey Lina (yes, the principal author of the Lina Law that has made squatting a hundred times worse since its passage), the Cabinet member who is in charge of the Napolcom, the Integrated National Police and the LGUs.

What is he and the government agencies under him doing to stop the proliferation of smut? Nothing. He has even abandoned his post in the NMAP. It has been left to a feisty and pretty woman, Tita Pilapil-Reverente, to lead the movement. Fr. Robert Reyes, who should be running against smut soon, is giving her moral support. We all should give her nothing less.

* * *

Comments to asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

In the land of the blind

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo says she sees nothing wrong with more American troops coming to this country. The Visiting Forces Agreement, she says, states that the country may hold more than one joint military exercise in one year. At one time, more than 5,000 US servicemen visited the country. Having been exposed to the economic conditions in Basilan, the US troops "now want the civic component of the Balikatan exercises strengthened." That is what the additional troops will do: engage in civic and medical work, like building clinics and performing harelip operations.

And they say the people who do not want foreign troops in this country are running out of argument and say the most absurd things!

Of course, Ms Macapagal sees nothing wrong with more US troops coming to the country. She saw nothing wrong with "war games" being held in a war zone to begin with, a patent violation of the VFA. She will see nothing wrong in a logistical agreement, a leasing agreement and even a basing agreement, which are the logical outcome of this escalation of American military presence.

But talk of logic, even if the VFA says the country may host several war games in a year, by no stretch of the imagination can one continuous and prolonged war game—whose terms already does violence to the very concept of war game—be equivalent to **several** war games.

And talk of logic as well, even if Basilan needs help having all its kids rescued from the misfortune of looking like rabbits—which is obviously the least of their worries—why should that justify more US troops coming to the country? Why shouldn't that merely justify more foreign medical help, or more Peace Corps volunteers?

Jose Apolinario Lozada, who chairs the House committee on foreign relations, says the American request for more troops in this country is giving him "the shivers" and he has begun to doubt the purpose of the exercise again. *"Ano ba talaga ang plano nila?"*

I am at least glad that someone in authority has come to have doubts, if not indeed come to his senses. But my dear congressman, wasn't it obvious from the start that the whole thing went beyond anything envisioned by the VFA? Wasn't it obvious from the start that an escalation of American military presence was inevitable? Wasn't it obvious from the start that the troops were but a prelude to a longer-term, if not permanent, American military presence in this country?

Does it make sense that the American troops have been here for three months and have not managed to rout by last estimate a hundred demoralized bandits? Does it make sense that American officials have regaled us with the wonders of their technology—at one point, the papers carried statements by the joint military officials telling us that spy planes and satellite technology were piercing through the veil of night and making the positions of the Abu Sayyaf known—and yet allowed the Abu Sayyaf to still mount a minor counterstrike? Does it make sense that the American troops, fighting alongside the entire Armed Forces of the Philippines, have not cornered the Abu Sayyaf the way the AFP alone did in but one month of operations there last year?

It's enough to make you think they do not want the Abu Sayyaf to disappear at all. The Abu Sayyaf goes, what's to justify keeping American troops in this country?

At that, all we have to go by is their word that Basilan has become a laboratory for terrorism. You take their statements at face value, which have increased in levels of stridence over the past weeks, and you would think Osama bin Laden is holed up in its mountains. In an article last March 11 in Globe and Mail, titled "Lies the Pentagon told us," John R. MacArthur had something to say about this. No, MacArthur is not a communist, which is what those who like having US troops in this country like to say. He is the publisher of Harper Magazine. He talks of the censorship—George Bush has forbidden reporters from covering US troops engaged in the anti-terrorist war—which has made "the Pentagon's Department of Strategic Lying, a.k.a. the Department of Strategic Influence" the final word on what is and what is not there.

"Technically, this is a secrecy policy, not censorship," MacArthur writes. "But it permits lying at a far more effective level. Censorship rules can always be broken by eyewitnesses, but it's harder to report what you can't see. If the government says such-and-such a target was surgically bombed and so many al-Qaeda members were killed, you can repeat it in the newspaper, but you can't refute or corroborate it."

Is Basilan any different? The American and Filipino officials tell us such a target was surgically excised and so many Abu Sayyaf members were killed, and that will appear on TV and the newspapers. But can anyone refute or corroborate it?

I remember again in this respect what Jovito Salonga told me when he first heard that Ferdinand Marcos had declared martial law. When Marcos said he was declaring it to meet an emergency, Salonga said, he was already dismayed. But when Marcos said further that he was declaring martial law to reform society, he was chilled to the bone. Fighting an emergency meant there was a timetable, even if you exaggerated its extent. But reforming society, that could go on and on. There and then, Salonga said, he knew martial law would not be a temporary measure, it would be a permanent one.

I feel exactly the same way. Fighting the Abu Sayyaf has a timetable, even if you exaggerate the extent of the threat. Rebuilding Basilan, or worse, Mindanao—there is no end to it. You still cannot see that the American troops are here to stay, you should join President Macapagal and see the Eye Foundation. It's not just Erap who suffers from creeping blindness.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Poor ODA use by Erap prods GMA officials to do better

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST year, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez succeeded in preventing the cancellation of a $10-billion national forestation program extended to the Estrada administration by the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The project targets the forestation of 200,000 hectares by the end of 2003, but the two donors were about to cancel a large component—$20 million from JBIC and $60 million from ADB—because of the government's failure to meet targets. For 1999, only 35 percent of the target was met, and 38 percent for 2000. Alvarez convinced the donors to continue the project on the promise of improved performance during his watch, and last year, the DENR met 90.2 percent of its target. The entire project is expected to be finished in two years.

When Education Secretary Raul Roco assumed office, a seven-year Department of Education project co-financed by the World Bank (WB), the Third Elementary Education Project, which seeks to improve the quality of elementary education in the poorest 22 provinces, was in danger of being cancelled after three years. This was because only two classrooms were built in 1999 and 272 out of a targeted 1,190 classrooms in 2000. To convince the WB to continue the project, Roco promised to do better. Last year 857 new classrooms were completed and 1,407 classrooms were rehabilitated, three times more than in the preceding two years. WB education projects director Emmanuel Jimenez has congratulated the DepEd for the "striking improvement" in the pace of project implementation.

* * *

The DENR and DepEd have shown what government agencies can do with foreign funding—if they set their heart to it. The failure in past years to use properly official development assistance (ODA) was brought into sharp focus during the recent two-day conference of the donor community, the Consultative Group, jointly sponsored by the Department of Finance and the WB at Clark in Pampanga. The majority of the 21 foreign donors complained of the Estrada administration's dismal record in ODA utilization. It was noted that by the time President Macapagal assumed office in January 2001, the ODA availment rate had dropped to 62 and 63 percent in 1999 and 2000, respectively, while disbursements fell to $840 million and $995 million compared to $1.1 billion in 1998.

It is ironic that the past regime failed to mobilize the ODA more aggressively, when other governments move heaven and earth to grab them. This is because, as Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin pointed out at Clark, "ODAs remain our cheapest source of foreign funds" since the grant component does not have to be paid at all, while the loan portion is usually long-term with very low interest. Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho has promised that the Macapagal administration would do better, and proof of this is that the President has removed her trusted aide, Marita Magpili-Jimenez, from her post as appointments secretary so that she can concentrate on moving the ODA in the government pipeline. The donor community is apparently convinced of Ms Macapagal's sincerity. It gave $2 billion more in ODA this year than last year, for a total of $2.8 billion, over $400 million in the form of grants. (Next: reasons for poor utilization.)

* * *

Alumni of the Ateneo High School, sections 2B and 3C in the early 1950s, composed of former students of Fr. Catalino G. Arevalo, S.J., have incorporated into the 2B3C Foundation Inc., headed by my brother, Luis Olivares Jr., to undertake various projects to help their alma mater. An early project was the editing and launch of Father Arevalo's first book, "And They Shall Name Him Emmanuél." Because of its project's success, Jesuit Provincial Romeo J. Intengan recently commissioned the 2B3C Foundation to work on the unpublished writings of the eminent Harvard-trained Jesuit historian Horacio de la Costa. Dr. Jose Rizal and De la Costa are considered the two most outstanding alumni of the Ateneo, but much of the latter's writings were left in disarray after he died of cancer in 1977. Publishing De la Costa's unpublished works is intended to help ensure his legacy among the Jesuits, Ateneo alumni and students.

The 2B3C Foundation accepted Intengan's challenge and a class team led by Dr. Roberto M. Paterno, who has a Ph.D. in History from Harvard University, read through reams of De la Costa's papers for months. Last November, 2B3C produced a set of four volumes with about 400 pages each, comprising his most significant writings, with selected photographs. These are: "Selected Writings of his Youth, 1927-1945," with a brief biographical background, 1916-1945; "Selected Essays on the Filipino and His Problems Today"; "Selected Studies in Philippine Colonial History"; and "Selected Homilies & Religious Reflections."

* * *

The Jesuit Philippine province, the Ateneo University and the 2B3C Foundation have decided to publish the four volumes in deluxe and paperback editions, to be launched on De la Costa's 86th birthday on May 9 this year. 2B3C, however, is making a special pre-publication offer of P2,000 for the collector's deluxe edition and P1,000 for the paperback edition, good up to April 10, 2002. This means that firm orders must be made on or before this date through e-mail: rsvp@alumni.ateneo.net or fax: (632)426-6080. Check payments made out to the 2B3C Foundation Inc. should be sent to the Office of Planning and Development & Alumni Affairs (OPD&AA), 2nd floor, Xavier Hall, Ateneo University, Loyola Heights, QC. The volumes will be ready for pick-up on May 9 from the OPD&AA, but for orders that will be delivered there's a charge of P160 for surface parcel post within the country, and P850 for abroad. For particulars, contact Ria Sison at the OPD&AA, Tel. No. 426-6081/82.

Problems of cityhood

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"UNITY" was a theme all speakers harped on during the "Coronation and Grand Ball" of the Alaminos City fiesta. Most everyone stressed the need for all sectors to work together to bring the fruits of progress to the new city, which has just turned a year old. And yet, as Agrarian Reform Secretary Nani Braganza, being honored that night as one of 12 Outstanding Alaminians, pointed out, the occasion itself was a symbol of the divisions among the people.

"We should make sure that the benefits of cityhood extend to all our citizens, but especially those outside the auditorium, those looking in and watching us," he declared, to the appreciative applause of all those pressing their noses against the wire fence.

As my nephew Rommel joked, the dance that night was for those living in the "*bayan*" or town proper, while the one scheduled the following day, dubbed the "Farmers and Fisherfolks' Night" was for the barrio folk. Actually, the "Grand Ball" was really for townsfolk who could afford to pay for a table, and for their guests, while the next night's affair was open to the public.

It seemed to me, watching the gyrations of the couples on the dance floor, that the ball was really meant for everyone who could hire a DI or dance instructor for the night. Of course, there were married couples and pairs dancing for sheer pleasure. There was also a white-haired *lola* who led each of her young grandsons to the dance floor for what looked like, judging from the boys' faces, sheer torture for them.

But the great majority were obviously DIs and their clients, as could be gleaned from the liquid movements of the pros, both men and women, as they glided and gamboled to every sort of music from boogie to tango to rumba. "Without the DIs," someone commented, "it would be a boring dance indeed." And judging from their constant presence on the dance floor, the DIs' clients really got their money's worth.

* * *

GUEST of honor for the night was Interior Secretary Joey Lina, rousing the drowsy audience by kidding that he has plenty of relatives among the folk of Alaminos, namely all the women named Carolina, Angelina, Rizalina and just Lina.

What really shook up everyone, though, was the secretary's pledge to provide the needed funds to hire more police and fire personnel and to look into ways to access funds for a new jail.

The ideal ratio between police and the populace, said Lina, was one police for every 1,000 population. With a population of 75,000, Alaminos can count on only 35 policemen, Mayor Eduardo Fontelera told him. As for firefighters, Lina observed that the city recently bought a new fire truck but it remains unused because there aren't enough firefighters to operate it.

"Rina, you will be appalled at the situation in your city jail," Lina remarked. When he dropped by City Hall, he said, he found that a single jail cell housed both men and women.

My cousin Lulu Garcia, who once visited the jail as part of the church apostolate, told me later that when she visited, she saw three women among the men. "The men said they let the women sleep on the bunk beds," she said, "and they all assured me that they don't touch the women." Still, let's hope Lina comes up with the funds for the new and segregated jail soon.

* * *

ANOTHER pressing concern was the drought afflicting much of the farmlands of Alaminos. Dean Jeremias Montemayor, who represented his son Leonie, the agriculture secretary, and was like him also one of the night's awardees, said proof of the crisis could be found just a few kilometers from the town proper.

"Just drive to the nearest barrio," he said, "and the farmers there will tell you that it hasn't rained since September." Alaminos may bear many of the trappings of urban development, he said, but unless the perks of cityhood reach ever-poorer barangays, social upheaval and criminality remain threats.

Much of the hope for the city's further development lies in tourism, since Alaminos hosts the Hundred Islands, perhaps Pangasinan's best-known tourist destination. Another guest, Philippine Tourism Authority GM Nixon Kua, pledged his office's support for efforts to develop this tourist attraction, which has lost a great deal of its natural appeal because of unregulated development and the encroachment of illegal fishers. In fact, giant clams which had been propagated a few years back in an effort to restore the coral reefs, were just recently destroyed by blast fishers. Still, said Kua, the PTA will do all it can to make the Hundred Islands a proper ecotourism destination once more.

* * *

BEFORE DEPARTING for Manila, the hubby and I joined a motorcade to Makatiw, a barangay just outside the city limits, to take part in the blessing of the St. Joseph College Seminary, which will train and educate future priests of the Diocese of Alaminos.

Officiating at the ceremonies was the Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Antonio Franco, with Bishop Jesus Cabrera and a delegation of priests from all over the diocese.

When he was installed as bishop of Alaminos, Bishop Cabrera had only 17 priests to help him look after the spiritual and mundane needs of the faithful all over Western Pangasinan. Compared to the two other dioceses in the province, the Diocese of Alaminos has the widest area with a fast growing population. The formation of new priests, to which the new seminary will be dedicated, was thus deemed an urgent priority.

The eyes of Sharbat Gula

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THE GREAT news is that they have found Sharbat Gula. The terrible news is that I will not be able to watch National Geographic's documentary series on the search that ended successfully because Skycable dropped the National Geographic Channel. (And for the many years I have been subscribing to Skycable and accumulating reward points, I was told after inquiring that I am entitled to a T-shirt that, again I was told, I have to pick up at the Benpres Building in Ortigas Center. *Inyo na lang*, please. I'd rather have the NG Channel back. So there.)

Who is Sharbat Gula? If you've been receiving these past several years National Geographic Magazine's persistent invitations to a subscription, you would have noticed that one great face framed by a veil, you would have stopped to behold those stunning sea-green eyes with flecks of brown, pupils constricted, gazing out from the NG brochure. Its caption merely says "Afghan refugee."

The picture is one of several that mostly show wildlife in its majestic glory. But this girl, this human being, holds her own. She has been, for a long time, NG's poster girl without a name. She was, in June 1985, NG's cover girl. Who was she? Where was she all these years? Even NG did not know.

Seventeen years later, they searched for her. And they found her. You would want to find her. I had always wondered about her, the way I do about people I photographed in the most remote places a long time ago. Millions of readers had seen her face and she did not even know it.

Now she knows. She has seen her own face at last, the face that went around the world. The face that, Nestor Torre said, symbolized the suffering of an entire generation of Afghan women and their children.

Said NG's Barbara McConnell: "For 17 years we did not know the name of the young girl who stared so hauntingly from the cover of the June 1985 National Geographic. Now we do. It is Sharbat Gula. Her name, in the Pashto language of the Pashtun people, means sweetwater flower girl... Millions around the world have wondered who the mysterious girl was. Now she is a grown woman with girls of her own, and we can give Sharbat Gula the dignity of her name."

I have not gotten hold of the latest National Geographic Magazine where Sharbat (then and now) is again on the cover, and the documentary won't be on Skycable so I had to content myself with the Internet version which is rather abbreviated. But my curiosity has been somewhat satisfied.

Steve McCurry was the photographer who captured that face, those eyes. It's a miracle that Sharbat Gula survived all these years, he said. "When I took her photo in 1984, Afghanistan was at war with the Soviet Union. The country was in a serious state of lawlessness, and the mortality rate among the refugee population was high. As with so many of her fellow Afghans, her survival is a testament to her courage and determination."

So how did they find her and how sure were they that the woman named Sharbat Gula was the Afghan girl? In January, after several months of US bombing of Afghanistan, McCurry joined an NG TV and film crew to methodically search for that face without a name. They showed the 1985 cover photo in refugee camps in Pakistan where McCurry had met the girl. After some false leads, a man who had lived in that camp said he knew who she was. She was alive. She was living in the mountainous Tora Bora region of Afghanistan. The man said he would find her and true enough, after three days, he and a friend brought Sharbat back to the camp.

"When we found her," said producer Lawrence Cumbo, "almost everyone in her family was ill. So the first thing we did was to send them to a doctor for medical care. She never asked for anything for herself. Her first concern was her family's health."

Sharbat must have been about 6 when her parents were killed in the Soviet bombing. To escape to safety the orphaned brood and their grandmother walked through snow-covered mountains for a week until they reached a camp in Pakistan. It was only in the mid-1990s, during a lull in the fighting, that Sharbat returned to her village.

It all unraveled like a poem—the story of her life, her journey, her survival, the love she has found, the new lives she has brought into this world. Oh, but technology had to butt in—just to make sure. Sharbat's eyes had to be scrutinized.

It has been proven that patterns in the iris are even more individual and distinct than fingerprints. So the patterns in the eyes of the 1985 cover girl and those in Sharbat's had to be compared. NG sought the help of John Daugman, inventor of the automatic iris recognition machine and professor at the University of Cambridge. Daugman who uses mathematical calculations was sure the Afghan refugee in the picture and Sharbat were one and the same. Iridian Technologies, a US company that develops iris-recognition security systems, was also tapped.

The FBI's forensic examiner Thomas Musheno did his own scrutiny and said the refugee girl in the photograph and Sharbat were the same person.

Sharbat had not been photographed since McCurry took her photo in 1984. Now she agreed to be photographed again, without a *burka* covering her, "because her husband told her it would be proper."

If not for the eyes and a tiny scar, the overall look of Sharbat now bears little resemblance to the face on the 1985 NG cover. But 17 years and bloody wars that wiped out 1.5 million people, marriage and motherhood did little change to her eyes. The ocean, the fire—they have remained in Sharbat Gula's eyes.

Good girl

YOUNGBLOOD

Estella

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

IF you look closely at my forehead, you will notice the faint outline of a U-shaped scar. Believe it or not, the 3-inch-long scar, resembling a horseshoe, is the mark left by my father's belt buckle.

It has been five years now, and I still cannot believe I survived that one fateful night when I was 14 years old. I was beaten up by my father so severely that I had to be hospitalized. My mother, a lawyer, almost filed a lawsuit charging my father, who is also a lawyer, with child abuse.

Was I a stubborn and rebellious child who merited such a terrible punishment? Let me tell you that I was a good girl—at first, anyway. I was the type of good girl who excelled in academics. I was the prim-and-proper type of girl who was always home for dinner and sat at the table without resting her elbows on top of it. I went to my piano lessons every Sunday afternoon. But most of all, I was the type who would remain angelic and compliant, if you would let me do what I wished.

When my parents barred me from seeing my boyfriend, I was outraged. In my youthful and innocent mind, I was convinced that I was truly, deeply in love. A lanky boy of 15, my boyfriend was for me the man who lived and breathed to love and sweep me into his arms. But the fact that we were so young, bold and fearless gave my parents all the more reason to keep us apart.

So one night, after one whole week of going straight home after school and not being allowed to take phone calls, I carried out what I thought to be a fool-proof plan. As soon as everyone in the house retired to the bedroom, I sneaked out through the kitchen door and went to the garage. Then as quietly as possible, I took the motorcycle outside the gate. At a "safe" distance away from our house, I turned on the motorcycle key, which I had taken from my father's pants, and sped off into the night. I didn't care about anything. All that mattered was the boy who was anxiously waiting for me at the tree house on the beach.

The tree house was our secret rendezvous. There, children and adults lazed the day away ever since it was abandoned by its owners. But at night, it belonged to us. Few people dared to go there at night since the huge *talisay* tree which held it up was said to be haunted by an *enkanto*. In fact, we were probably the only two naughty *enkantos* who went there after dark.

There in our beloved tree house we spent long hours laughing, talking and even crying together. At night we gazed into the open sea as if we were looking at our youthful hopes and dreams.

It was in that tree house where we cried our hearts out together when our problems and anxieties seemed too overwhelming. It was also in there where I had my very first kiss. No, we didn't even think of going beyond that. We were too young to think of sex, babies, marriage and other adult stuff. We had a very clear, simple and uncomplicated relationship. We vowed to stick together and grow old with each other in the simple and uncomplicated world we imagined for ourselves.

That night, just like any other night we spent in that tree house, we held hands and talked about love, life and most of all about how we had missed each other like crazy. But we must have missed each other so much that we forgot about the time. It was almost two o'clock in the morning when I walked our motorcycle back to our house as quietly as I could. I was still on cloud nine and too happy to even notice that our gate was wide open.

When I remembered that I had closed if before leaving, fear set in. My heart began to pound more wildly when I entered the gate and saw that the lights in our house were on and I discerned the dark silhouette of a huge man standing on the doorway.

The salty taste of blood filled my mouth as the thick leather of the belt cut through the side of my face, hitting my lips. I could not even hear his angry screams. All his words came like a muffled stream of noise and fury amid his violent blows. Speech failed me as I struggled to shield myself from the heavy lashes. He would not have stopped hitting me had my mother not thrown herself between us.

Back in the safety of my room, my mother treated the cuts on my swollen body. I was half-naked and lying face down, when suddenly tears started to stream down my face. I realized with some amazement that I had not shed a tear when my father was beating me. Of course, the pain from all the blows and cuts was excruciating, but I didn't cry because of the physical pain. What I felt inside was worse than all the physical torture and the wounds I sustained. The world was not a pure, simple and uncomplicated place after all. It was full of unfairness, excess and abuse.

The next day in school I fainted. I was brought to the hospital, and the doctors said there was a blood clot in my brain. Thank God, it wasn't so serious as to require surgery. I also suffered a minor fracture in my spine, but maybe my bones were as hard as my head, so that was not cause for worry.

I stayed in the hospital for one week. I often saw the doctors and nurses outside my room, whispering and gossiping in hushed voices about me.

Before the week was over, my father visited me and asked for forgiveness. I am not too sure now who started it, but I asked for his forgiveness, too.

Today, the cuts are gone and most of my scars have faded away. All that remains visible is the scar on my forehead. Nobody suspects that the faint outline of a horseshoe was made by a belt buckle.

Many things have changed for me. I'm no longer the good girl I was before, though I am not a bad girl now either. The world has become so complicated. I know that one's excellent scholastic record, credentials and reputation do not completely guarantee his goodness as a person. But even if the world is not as pure and simple as I imagined it before, I still see so much beauty and goodness in it.

I have also learned that you can't erase the past. I have been away from home since I went to college. I understand the old tree house still stands on the same spot near the beach. When I look at the mirror, I see not only the pale scar but memories of that terrible night.

The last time I heard about my former boyfriend, he had gotten his new girlfriend pregnant. Things do change, indeed.

Estella, 19, is a mass communications student in a university in the Visayas.

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Helpless against the PPA in Dumaguete

I AM an alumnus of Silliman University, I grew up in Dumaguete City. Together with many alumni and Dumagueteños who live abroad, I have been closely following the controversy regarding the reclamation project of the Philippine Ports Authority which threatens to destroy not only the physical environment, but also the soul of my innocent hometown.

As a Filipino who works as an environmental consultant, who has lived in a First World country and who has learned to appreciate the value of environmental protection and conservation of natural resources, I would like tell my fellow Filipinos that they are very, very lucky to still be breathing clean air, drinking clean, fresh water and swimming in clean ocean water. These resources should never, for a single moment, be taken for granted. Many First World countries have spent billion of dollars cleaning up their environment just so they can drink clean water, breathe clean air and see fish return to their lakes and rivers.

Several concerned groups have proposed alternatives to reclamation as well as alternate locations for the port expansion, but the PPA refuses to consider them. Lately, the PPA has used its long arm and political power to bully its way toward getting a clearance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the project without having an appropriate environmental impact assessment. Concerned groups do not have the resources and political power that the PPA has. We feel helpless.

On behalf of hundreds of alumni, Dumagueteños and Friends of Silliman University, I request assistance in our crusade. For more information on the background and status of this issue, please visit the following websites: www.savedumaguete.kom.ph and www.su.edu.ph

—MOSES L. ALCALA, New Jersey, USA, moemanofnj@aol.com

LPG sales must be strictly monitored

THE INCREASE in fire-related disasters caused by LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) leaks and explosions is terrifying and alarming. But the problem is being ignored by the concerned government agencies: the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Just recently, a conflagration in Balintawak, Quezon City, caused some 500 families to lose their homes as well as most, if not all, of what they owned. It was a five-alarm, three-hour fire that took 30 fire trucks to put out. The local fire department had to raise a Task Force India alarm, a general alarm that tells the seriousness of the event.

This tragedy was made even more lamentable by the fact that it was caused by an LPG tank explosion after an 11-year-old girl lit up a gas stove to cook.

In the past two years alone, billions of pesos worth of assets, not to mention livelihood, were wasted due to fire. We urge the DOE to intensify the monitoring of under-filled cylinders. The DTI must strictly monitor the quality and distribution of imported and locally manufactured LPG cylinders. Most importantly, the cylinders circulating in the market must be inspected for safety.

Unauthorized distributors and resellers are also proliferating in the country, selling underweight cylinders and low-quality LPG, which pose much danger to the consuming public. Billions of pesos have already been lost because of this. Many people have also lost their homes, livelihood, investments and assets. Consumers are fooled and are made to believe that they are buying cylinders with the right LPG content.

The oil industry and the government should work together to help consumers identify resellers and distributors offering quality LPG. Additional information campaigns through media like print should be considered. Tips on how to detect under-filled and unsafe cylinders should be provided at the barangay level for faster information dissemination.

We hope that March being a fire prevention month, the concerned national government agencies and all oil industry players will address these issues.

—ERNESTO RAMOS for the Concerned Citizens of Quezon City, 49 V. Luzon St., GSIS Village, Barangay Sangandaan, Project 8, Quezon City

Why is it so hard to own a house here?

IN AUSTRALIA when you buy a house, you make a 5-percent deposit and have 30 years to pay at an interest rate of 5.6 percent. Moreover, the government gives you $17,000 if it's your first house. Needless to say, most Aussies own their own house.

Think of how many industries benefit from this, from real estate developers to manufacturers. And think of the many jobs created.

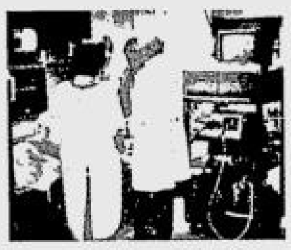
The banks love it: People will meet payments on their house before almost anything else. (Of course, banks have to have the ability to foreclose on defaulters without convoluted legal challenges.)

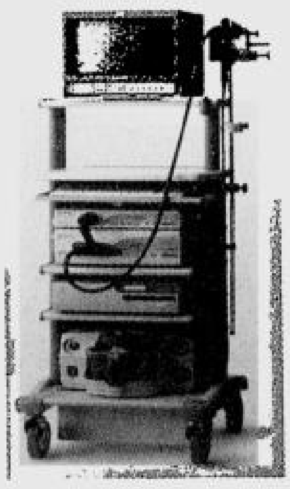
As a young man, I found it almost impossible to raise what was then a much higher deposit requirement. But I could have afforded the monthly payments; I was, after all, paying rent for using someone else's house.

So, I ask the banks in the Philippines: Why impose impossible conditions on lending to buy a house? Isn't it time to do some rethinking?

Of course, the courts must stop making it difficult to foreclose on those who default on their loans. Otherwise one can't fault the banks for being reluctant to lend.

—PETER WALLACE, president, The Wallace Business Forum, 14/F Sagittarius Bldg., HV dela Costa St., Makati City





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UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS HOSPITAL
España, Manila

A different Calvary

IT killed President Manuel L. Quezon, the American writer and poet Edgar Allan Poe, the Polish composer Frederic Chopin, American First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and, as recently as 1967, the British actress Vivien Leigh. "It" is tuberculosis, and its victims number in the millions; one estimate is that in the last century alone, TB killed 200 million people.

In the Philippines, a Department of Health press release laments that "there has been little change in the state of the TB problem for the past 14 years." We get a long and depressing litany of statistics: TB as the fifth leading cause of death in the country; 25 million Filipinos (one-third of the population) infected with the TB bacillus, 600,000 of them with the infectious form; 75 Filipinos dying each day from the disease. In so many words and numbers, TB is a national *Kalbaryo*, an ordeal that afflicts families and communities.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated March 24 as World Tuberculosis Day and wants to remind people that the adverse impact of TB goes beyond the deaths. The majority of TB patients are adults who should have been in the prime of their productive lives. Each TB infection runs up expenses for a family. There are the medicines, which require at least six months of treatment and can run to about P5,000 if you use branded preparations. The government does supply free drugs but even then, if the patient has a serious infection, he or she may not be able to work for several months and may even have to be hospitalized. If the patient dies, that means even more opportunity costs, the premature death meaning several years of lost potential income.

Why did WHO choose March 24 to remind people of this terrible disease? It was on this date in 1882 that the microbiologist Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis. In the 120 years that have elapsed, the war against TB has meant many victories and defeats. A vaccine, BCG, has been around for nearly 50 years but only gives about 70 percent protection so researchers continue their search for a more effective vaccine.

Drugs to combat the disease came slowly and in several waves, but the battle in this therapeutic front here has been difficult because the bacillus is able to develop resistance rapidly, especially when the medicine is not used properly, as is the case in the Philippines where many patients do not complete their treatment.

Super TB bacilli are now found in the Philippines. They are resistant to the more common anti-TB medicines in the market.

But there's more to fighting TB than medicines and vaccines. In most developed countries, TB came under control even before medicines were discovered. This happened as living conditions improved, including better nutrition (which means stronger resistance) and less congested housing (which makes it more difficult for the TB bacilli to be passed on). Today, 99 percent of TB deaths occur in developing countries.

The link between TB and poverty is all too clear, and is often used to teach public health students to look at how economics interacts with health and disease. Besides economics, there's also the cultural element. We see, for example, that even if so many Filipinos are affected by the disease, TB is not a topic for polite conversations. Doctors will gently tell parents that their child has "primary complex" or "weak lungs," which creates more problems because parents then take the condition rather lightly, using the drugs intermittently or, paradoxically, using the drugs for extended periods because they think the medicines are just "vitamins for the lungs."

Patients and their families fail to appreciate the need to have the patient complete the treatment, which requires taking several medicines daily, over a six-month period. The WHO advocates DOTS (direct observed treatment) with medical supervision to ensure "patient compliance," but I've always felt we need to give more emphasis as well to family and community support. The disease needs to be stripped of its stigma so people can encourage a relative or neighbor, "*Uy,* Mang Ambo, you're putting on weight again, and you're not as pale as before. It must be the medicines working. Get well soon!"

Our health professionals and workers need to deal with the many weaknesses of our health culture, all the way up to the still widespread Filipino habit of spitting anywhere. I didn't realize how formidable this problem was until recently, when a young college-educated friend expectorated, with full sound effects, and then sent a wad of phlegm flying and landing on the ground a few inches away from me. When I grimaced, he apologized but explained, "Wouldn't it have been more disgusting if I had swallowed the phlegm?" He was totally serious.

In the final analysis though, it is still the macro-level obstacles that remain the most formidable. Our public health specialists need to look at how other countries "poorer" than us have been able to control TB. China, for example, was able to cut down TB rates much faster than we have because they prioritized an improvement of living conditions, implemented health education, and, perhaps most importantly, mobilized communities in public health campaigns.

Dr. Manuel Dayrit, the current health secretary, started his medical career working in TB control among poor rural and urban communities. I suspect this experience trained him well for social mobilization. We saw that with the recent successful campaign to get children vaccinated against polio. Mobilization against TB will be more difficult, but "General" Dayrit just might be able to succeed here if we all cooperate, starting with our own families and neighborhoods.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Erap trying to make lawyers irrelevant

THE MAJORITY of our people who are neither pro nor anti-Erap cannot understand why he has lost hope of obtaining justice under our judicial system.

His nine lawyers belong to the big league and they know all the tricks of the legal profession. They can block the introduction of every irrelevant evidence by the prosecution. They can discredit the testimony of witnesses.

One of his lawyers, former Justice Serafin Cuevas, said during a radio interview that the prosecution has not proven anything yet. Erap himself said that he is innocent. So why does he want to move the deliberations on his case from the courtroom to the streets and let the people determine his guilt or innocence?

The people in the streets are not privy to the evidence for and against him. Neither are they competent to evaluate them. If he had his way, our judicial system and the legal profession would become irrelevant.

—JOSE A. SUBIDA, executive officer, Philippine Lawyers' Referral Centre, Unit 30 Sampaguita St., San Pedro Subd. IX, Bagbag, Novaliches, Quezon City

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Suicide bomber kills 6 in Israel

JERUSALEM—A suicide bomber blew himself up on a packed commuter bus in northern Israel during morning rush hour Wednesday, killing himself and six passengers in the most serious challenge yet to weeklong US truce efforts.

The militant Islamic Jihad group claimed responsibility for the blast that also wounded 28 passengers, 10 of them seriously. The powerful explosion blew out the sides of the pink-and-white bus, and sent passengers flying into the air. "I saw everything go black, and seconds later the smoke cleared and I saw everyone screaming and crying," said a witness, truck driver Nahum Borochov.

The bus attack came at a time when a Saudi peace plan—an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories in exchange for comprehensive peace with the Arab world—was gaining new momentum.

On Tuesday, the head of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, said his organization backed the idea which is to be presented at next week's Arab summit in Beirut, Lebanon.

It was not clear whether a crucial truce meeting of Israeli and Palestinian security officials with US mediator Anthony Zinni would take place as planned. Palestinian security chief Jibril Rajoub said that as far as he understood, the meeting was still on for Wednesday evening in Tel Aviv. In the session, the Palestinians are to respond to Israel's proposal for a truce timetable. Officials have said a truce declaration was possible after the meeting.

There was no immediate Palestinian reaction to the bus bombing.

On Tuesday evening, the Palestinian Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to the truce plan worked out last year by CIA chief George Tenet which requires Palestinian security forces to disarm militias and arrest suspected militants.

Israeli officials have expressed doubt about the Palestinians' ability to carry out the pledge, since militias; even those loyal to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, have become increasingly powerful in the past 18 months of fighting. Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which have carried out scores of attacks on Israelis, have said they would not honor a truce.

A Hamas spokesperson, Ismail Abu Shanab, said Wednesday that attacks on Israelis would continue, despite the Palestinian Authority's renewed call for a truce. "Our people are facing aggression until this moment, and our resistance will continue as long as the occupation exists on our land," said Abu Shanab. "This is our strategy."

In Wednesday's attack near the town of Afula, a suicide bomber got on a crowded bus with many soldiers on board and blew himself up at about 7:10 a.m., as the bus was driving on a main highway on the outskirts of the Arab village of Musmus.

Mohammed Agbariya, a resident of Musmus, said he had just left his home near the highway when he heard a loud blast. "I looked toward the road and saw a cloud of smoke," he told Israel TV's Channel 1. "When the smoke cleared, I saw a bus torn in two. I heard screams from the bus."

The explosion blew large holes into the side of the bus. More than an hour after the blast, after the wounded had been evacuated, two bodies were seen lying on the pavement, covered with plastic bags, and two bodies were still on the bus. In all, six passengers were killed, in addition to the assailant, police said.

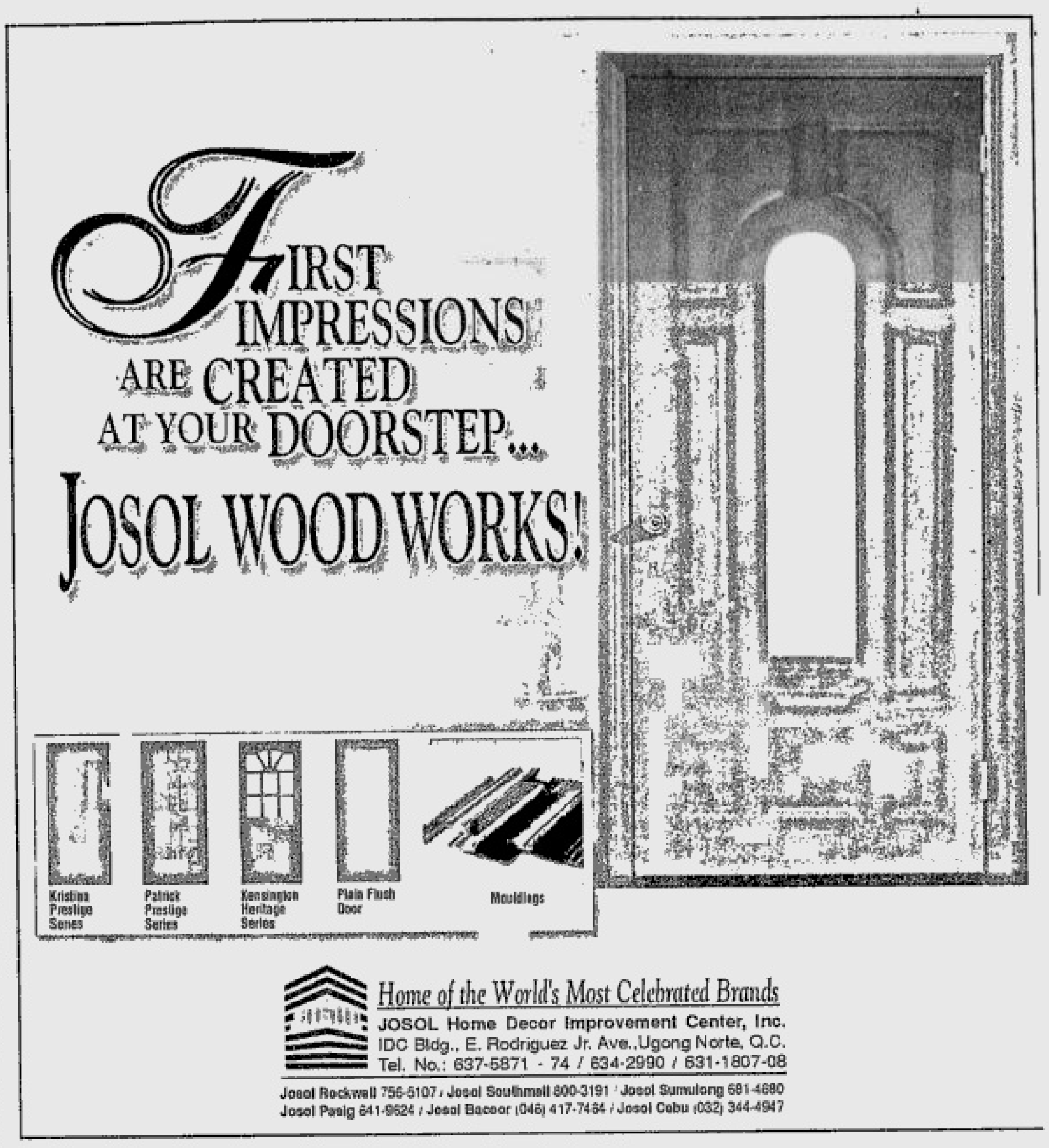
In a telephone call to The Associated Press, Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility. The group identified the attacker as Rafat Abu Diyak, 24, from the West Bank town of Jenin, and said the bombing came as revenge for Israel's killing of group members in recent military strikes.

Since the outbreak of fighting in September 2000, 1,218 people have been killed on the Palestinian side and 359 on the Israeli side.

Shortly after the explosion, Israel's security Cabinet convened Wednesday for a regularly scheduled meeting.

During the session, ministers originally had been set to discuss a decision by.Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to lift a travel ban on Arafat and enable him to attend the Arab summit if a truce takes hold. Several ministers have proposed that Arafat should not be allowed back.

AP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Caloocan	Bulacan	117.50	125.00
Navotas	Bulacan	117.50	125.00
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Al-Qaida, Taliban leaders hiding in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan—Protected by sympathetic clerics, up to 1,000 Taliban and al-Qaida leaders are hiding in Pakistan and planning a Taliban comeback in Afghanistan, according to Taliban members and others familiar with the Islamic movement.

Most of the exiles—including some of the best-known figures in the Islamic militia—live quietly in Pakistan's lawless frontier region, protected by tribal leaders of their own Pashtun ethnic group in an area where the central government's authority is limited.

Many of the Taliban fugitives remain convinced that interim Prime Minister Hamid Karzai's hold on power depends on US support and once the Americans are gone, they will have little trouble dealing with Afghans who are now allied with Washington.

"I am waiting for the big war," said Mullah Towha, former chief of security for the Taliban governor of Afghanistan's Nangharhar province. "America and Britain will have to leave one day, and then we will have a `jihad' against those Afghans who fought with them against other Muslims."

The mullah, who has trimmed his beard and abandoned his distinctive Taliban turban for a white skullcap, spoke to The Associated Press in a car as it weaved through the Khyber Pass in the middle of Pakistan's tribal belt. He lives in an Islamic shrine protected by a "pir," or holy man.

Pakistan has repeatedly denied knowingly harboring al-Qaida and Taliban renegades and has insisted that intelligence service links to extremists were severed after President Pervez Musharraf threw his support to the US-led war on terrorism last year.

"There is absolutely no truth in these reports," chief government spokesperson Maj. Gen. Rashid Quereshi said Tuesday. He called the idea that Pakistani intelligence was still supporting Taliban fugitives "nonsense" and "part of a malicious campaign against Pakistan."

Nonetheless, the Taliban fugitives reportedly living in Pakistan include some of the most high-profile and influential members of the hardline Islamic movement. All once worked closely with Pakistan's powerful intelligence service and have close ties to influential figures in the Pakistani military and government establishment.

According to Taliban and other sources, they include former Defense Minister Mullah Obeidullah, former Interior Minister Abdul Razzak, former Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Hasan Akhund and Amir Khan Muttaqi, spokesperson for the Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar.

It is unclear why the Pakistani government has made no move to round them up. Local chiefs in the border area wield considerable power and tracking them down would take time and resources and doubtless meet local resistance.

Also, before Sept. 11, top fugitives were close to powerful figures in Pakistan, who may be protecting them.

The list also includes Jalaluddin Haqqani, who several Afghans say was the mastermind of al-Qaida and Taliban efforts to regroup in his stronghold of Paktia province—target of the just-concluded US-led Operation Anaconda.

The police chief of Paktia's provincial capital Gardez, Haji Mohammed Ishaq, said Haqqani was living in Pakistan's South Waziristan region along the Afghan border, supported by former leaders of Pakistan's spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence or ISI. *AP*

Bush can't vouch for N. Korea on nukes

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush, in a break with previous US policy, has decided that he cannot certify that North Korea is not hiding nuclear-bomb making materials, an administration official said Tuesday.

The official, asking not to be identified, said the decision would have no practical effort on US nuclear cooperation with North Korea but is a clear signal of US unhappiness with Pyongyang.

It comes less than two months after Bush moved closer to a confrontation with North Korea by listing that country as part of an "axis of evil," along with Iran and Iraq.

Bush's decision not to certify relates to North Korean compliance with a 1994 agreement under which North Korea pledged to freeze a nuclear weapons program in exchange for two light water nuclear reactors, funded mostly by South Korea and Japan.

North Korea has been allowing International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to monitor the site in where the nuclear program was frozen. At issue is whether North Korea had secretly carried out a nuclear bomb project elsewhere.

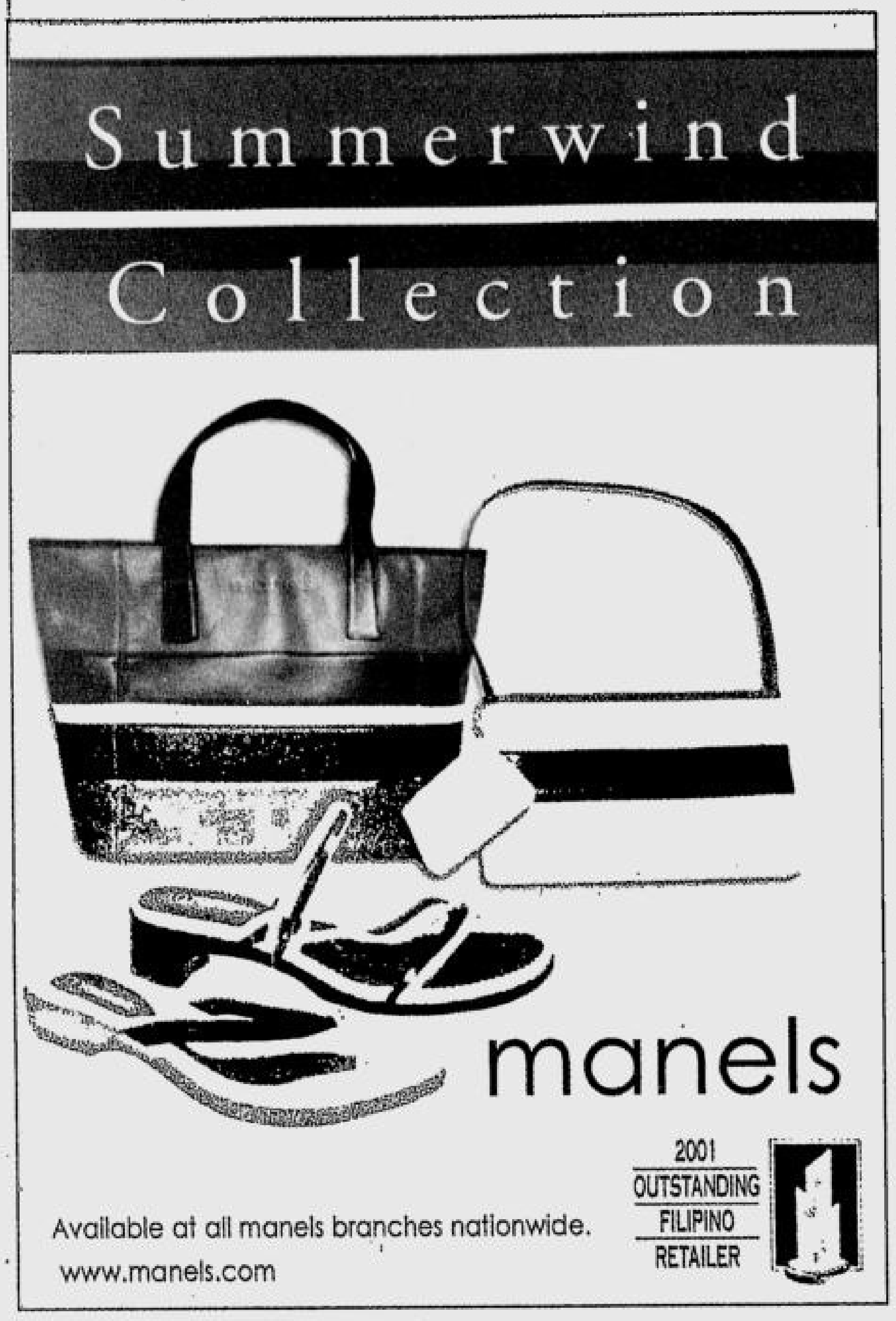
The key US contribution to the 1994 agreement is to provide 500,000 tons of fuel to North Korea each year to help the country cover its energy needs during the period before the new reactors become operational.

But as a condition for the fuel deliveries to go ahead, Congress insisted that the president examine North Korean compliance with all provisions of the 1994 agreement.

It gave the president the option of certifying North Korean compliance, waiving the requirement or not certifying.

Until now, North Korea has been certified every year but Bush this year will exercise his waiver authority to show unhappiness with North Korea's refusal to fully expose its nuclear history by permitting inspections by the IAEA, the official said.

The issue has been attracting increasing administration attention because these inspections must be completed before key components of the two new reactors are installed. *AP*



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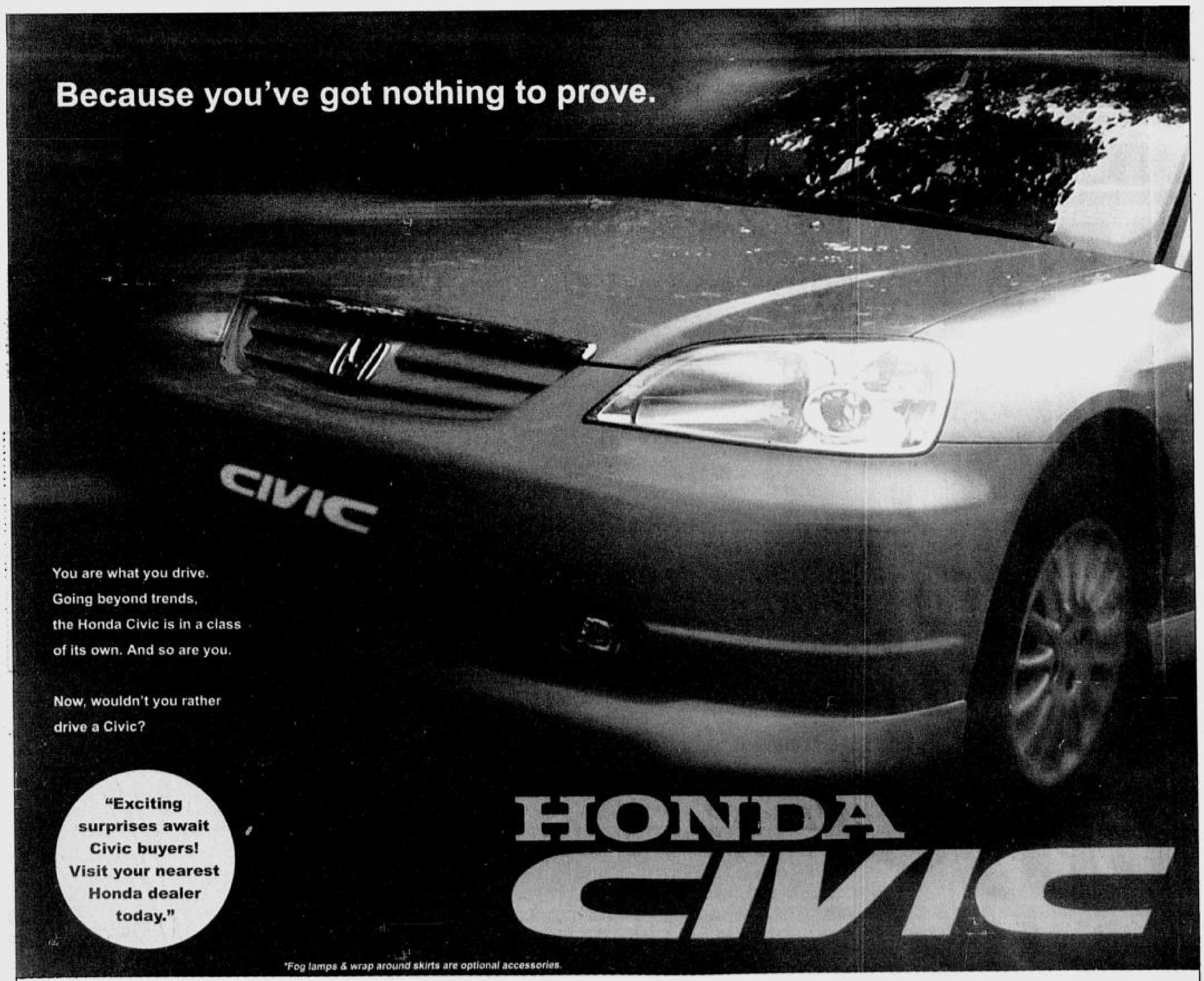

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Suharto trial

JAKARTA—The murder trial of the youngest son of ex-dictator Suharto opened Wednesday with prosecutors alleging that he paid two hitmen $10,000 and showed them how to fire the guns used to slay a Supreme Court judge. Hutomo Mandala Putra, known as Tommy, is accused of ordering the assassination of the judge who had earlier sentenced him to 18 months in prison over a multimillion-dollar real estate scam. The 39-year-old millionaire arrived in handcuffs at the Central Jakarta District Court under heavy security. Dressed in a batik shirt, he smiled and waved at a crowd of onlookers and reporters but said nothing. As proceedings got underway, he looked downcast and slightly bewildered. Before the hearing, his lawyers said the charges were baseless and that he was innocent, although they feared he might not get a fair trial. *AP*

Minister quits

TAIPEI—Less than two months after taking the job, Taiwan's economics minister offered to resign on Wednesday, blaming a hostile political environment for hindering her work. Christine Tsung's request to step down could be a serious blow to the inexperienced government, which has made improving the economy its most urgent goal. Taiwan is mired in its first recession in decades, and the island is suffering from an exodus of investment and jobs to rival China, where labor is cheaper. Tsung—the former president of the island's biggest airline, China Airlines—accepted the job in January after several other better-qualified candidates declined to take it. If the premier accepted Tsung's resignation, finding a replacement for her could be difficult. This was the first time she served in Taiwan's central government, and she appeared to be ill-prepared for the job. The soft-spoken Tsung struggled to deal with lawmakers, who yell at ministers and grill them about the intricacies of their jobs during rowdy sessions in the legislature. *AP*

Oldest person dies

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan—Maud Farris-Luse, recognized last year by the Guinness World Records book as the world's oldest living person, has died. She was 115. She died Monday from complications of pneumonia at Community Health Center of Branch County in Coldwater, a town south of Grand Rapids in southwestern Michigan. She had been in the hospital since Sunday night, said Kyle Fassett, administrator of the Laurels of Coldwater, the nursing home where Farris-Luse lived. Farris-Luse was 115 years, 56 days old. "It was her time," said great-granddaughter Laurie Ferris, 32. "She lived a long time and now she's in a better place. She passed away very, very peacefully." Last June, Guinness editors recognized Farris-Luse as the oldest living person whose age could be verified. Though her birth certificate was lost over the years, the editors authenticated her age through other documents, including US Census Bureau records and her 1903 marriage license. *AP*

Ice shelf collapses

DENVER—An enormous floating ice shelf in Antarctica that has existed since the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago collapsed this month with staggering speed during one of the warmest summers on record there, scientists say. Scientists stopped short of blaming the collapse on global warming caused by human activity. But they noted that the ice shelf had persisted through previous climate changes well before civilization began altering the environment. "It's a profound event," said geologist Christina Hulbe of Portland State University. "This ice shelf has endured many climate oscillations over many thousands of years. Now it's gone." Satellite images show that the piece of the Larsen Ice Shelf collapsed during a five-week period that ended March 7. It splintered into a plume of drifting icebergs. The collapsed area was designated Larsen B, and was 200 meters thick and with a surface area of 3,250 sq. km. *AP*

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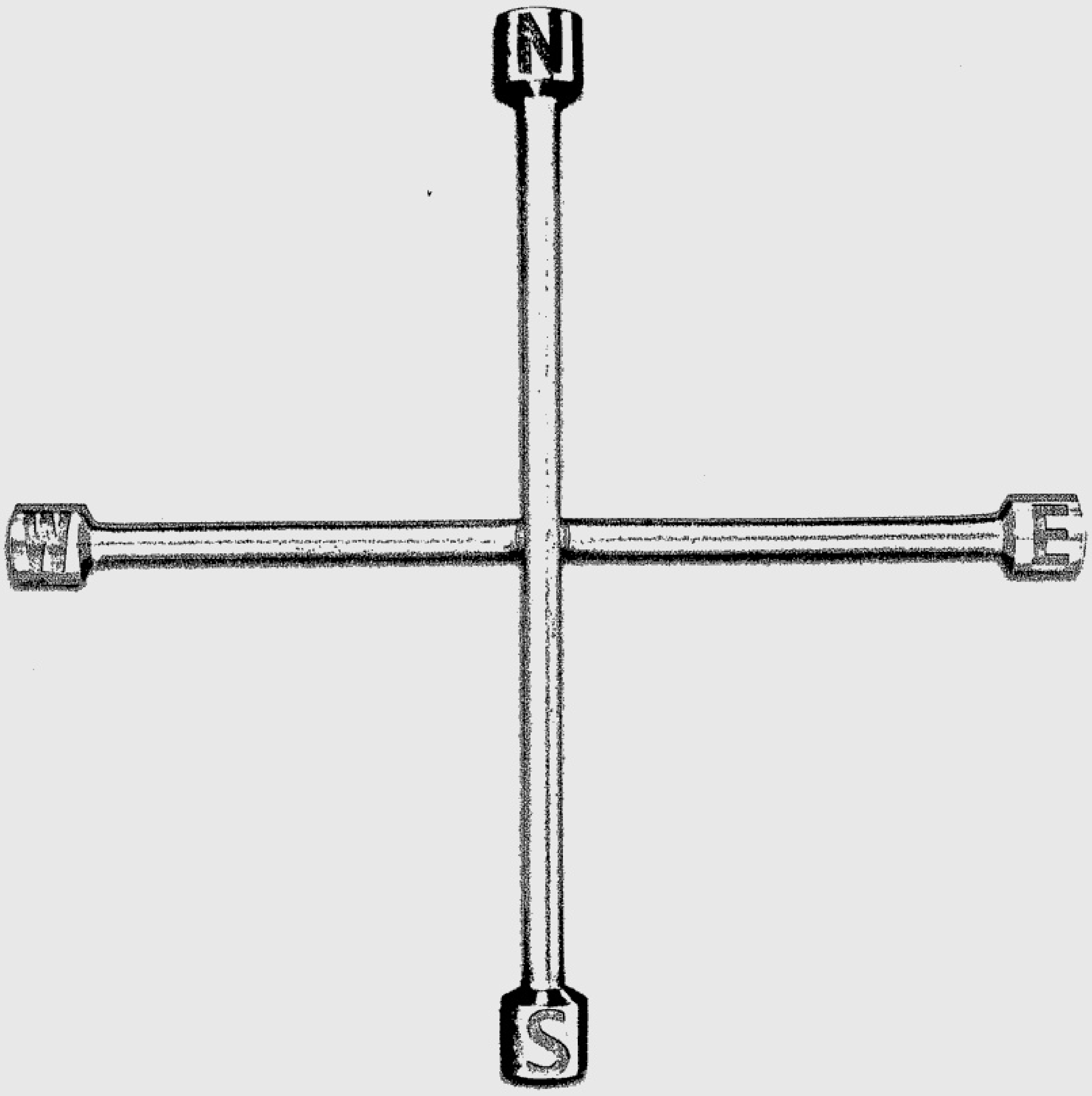

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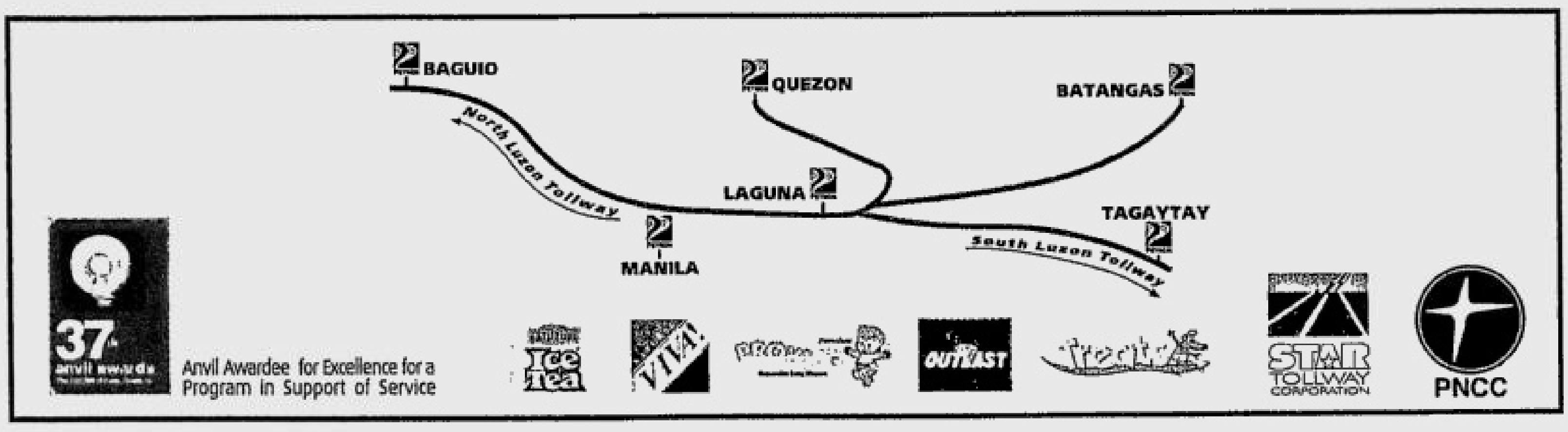

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Co-ops face threat of power cut-off

BAGUIO CITY—The 119-member Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (Philreca) on Tuesday offered to negotiate with the National Power Corp. to forestall its threat to cut off power to heavily indebted power utility cooperatives in the provinces.

Aklan, including Boracay Island, became the first casualty of the Napocor's debt crisis after acting Napocor president Rolando Quilala cut off power to the Aklan Electric Cooperative (Akelco).

The cooperative owed the Napocor over P25 million, said Wendell Ballesteros, Philreca general manager.

Philreca president Rosalino Culalic, who is based in Pangasinan, directed his Manila office to expedite a review of all power cooperatives to determine how Philreca can negotiate bailout terms on behalf of cooperatives threatened by power cuts.

A source at the Benguet Electric Cooperative here suggested instead a review of the recently signed implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9136 (Electric Power Industry Reform Act).

"This may really be a consequence of the power deregulation law. This debt collection may be what we have feared all along. We fought the bill because of these issues last year. We expect to be bought out or to be pressured into relinquishing our cooperatives so private investors can take over," the source told the INQUIRER.

This was the substance of a position paper prepared by Philreca board director Gerardo Versoza, Beneco manager, which was consolidated with other proposals by Philreca and submitted to Congress in 2000 at the height of the power bill's deliberations.

But Ballesteros brushed off the suggestion when asked by the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

"We did oppose the power reform measure and we do have issues against its IRR. But I don't think (Quilala) is applying that here. I think these are internal problems among cooperatives, which need to be addressed properly," he said.

Ballesteros said auditors of Philreca were reviewing the capital status and fiscal operations of the Cagayan de Sulu Electric Cooperative, the Tiaco Electric Cooperative and the power utility outfits in Masbate, Tawi-Tawi, Catanduanes, Basilan and Lanao del Sur.

The Philreca's list of imperiled cooperatives was culled from Tuesday's newspaper reports.

"I have already called for a meeting with representatives of these endangered cooperatives. We need to find out their concerns before we air them directly (before Quilala). But several endangered cooperatives are defensible. Basilan is in a no-man's zone because of the peace and order situation there. The economy there is really slow, and no one will pay the power bills. Napocor will understand," Ballesteros said.

He said Philreca was also monitoring the cooperatives in Central Luzon, whose economic predicament following the 1991 eruptions of Mt. Pinatubo continues to affect power consumption there today.

But Ballesteros said the association might not be able to deal with cooperatives whose finances were misused or embezzled.

"If it is graft and corruption, that may be a problem best left to the members of the cooperative and the National Electrification Administration, which supervises cooperatives," he said. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

'Jueteng' witness turns out to be in NBI custody

ANGELES CITY—A *jueteng* whistleblower, wanted by both Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, Central Luzon police director, since early March, turned out to be in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Ruben Marin, a *jueteng* area manager here who has been reported missing since March 7, came out on Wednesday to expose the NBI's alleged mishandling of the anti-*jueteng* drive.

Marin reestablished contacts with Pampanga reporters but he did not say how long he had been in the custody of the NBI.

In a series of text messages and a call from his mobile phone to confirm if it was him who was communicating, Marin disclosed that the NBI had not filed charges against any of the 60 collectors who were arrested on March 5.

Marin, also known by his alias "JR," said the blue book that contains a master list of *jueteng* protectors of Melchor Caluag, said to be Pampanga's biggest operator of the illegal numbers game, had also disappeared.

According to him, there were indications that NBI Regional Director Anthony Liongson took a *"ningas cogon"* attitude on the illegal gambling drive.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Liongson or his assistant regional director for comments.

Marin, who claimed to have arranged Caluag's operations in Angeles City in March last year, aired plans to leave the NBI's custody.

He said he wanted to be in the care of the National Anti-Crime Commission. If that was not possible, he said, he would ask protection from politicians, whom he did not name.

Desperate at not seeing results from the NBI despite his cooperation, Marin said he was also considering talking to Berroya. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

The Philippine Council of Management

PHILCOMAN holds induction program in Malacañang

Romulo swears in new Philcoman officers and governors
Executive Secretary Alberto G. Romulo administers the oath of office to the officers and members of the board of governors of the Philippine Council of Management. From left: Secretary Romulo, Emmanuel Noli Santos, president emeritus, Celso P. Templo, president, Nick Matias, VP-national affairs, Nerza A. Rebustes, VP-international affairs, Victoria Collado, secretary, Odette Constantino, asst. secretary; Honorato O. Colico, Edmundo Q Quiocho, Ma. Corazon T. Lopez, Tomas Orola, Enrique H. Davila, Stuart Walbridge, Franklin M. Littaua, Emmanuel Candido Soriente-Santos II, Carlito Villanueva, and Ped Salvador, members of board of governors and committee chairmen.

Executive Secretary Alberto G. Romulo inducted the 2002 officers and members of the board of governors of the Philippine Council of Management at the Malacañang Social Hall led by Celso P. Templo, president, Emmanuel Noli T. Santos, president emeritus, Nicanor A. Matias, vice-president for national affairs and chairman of 34th National Management Congress, Nerza A. Rebustes, vice-president for international affairs, Victoria Collado, secretary, Odette Constantino, assistant secretary and chair of professional management development committee, Henry Sy, treasurer, Edmundo Q. Quiocho, auditor, Ma. Corazon T. Lopez, public affairs officer, Governor Emmanuel Candido Soriente-Santos II, chairman of youth affairs, Governor Enrique H. Davila, chairman of International Advisory Council, Governor Leonor M. O'Leary, chair of finance committee, Gov. Honorato O. Colico, chairman of ways and means, Gov. Franklin A. Littaua, Gov. Tomas Orola, and Gov. Carlito Villanueva, co-chair of PMD committee; Committee Chairmen Pedrito Salvador, research and communications, and Stuart Walbridge, global networking.

Celso P. Templo is the current district collector of customs at the NAIA. He is CESO V and holds the rank of Collector of Customs VI. He obtained his MBA and Ph. D. in Management from the International Academy of Management and Economics (iAME), also known as the iAcademy and International School of Management and Economics. He is married to Corazon Suratos-Templo by whom he has four children -- Coracel, Ma. Corazon, Celso Jr., and Maria Ching

Templo has attended numerous seminars, training programs, and conferences here and abroad and has received more than two dozens of commendations and awards for meritorious services and exemplary achievement from his superiors in government, professional, civic and media organizations.

Philcoman lines up 2002 seminars

The 2002 Philcoman team of leaders
Front row from left: Emmanuel Candido Soriente-Santos II, Victoria Collado, Odette Constantino, Nerza A. Rebustes, Ma. Corazon T. Lopez, Ped Salvador, Emmanuel Noli T. Santos. Back row (L): Stuart Walbridge, Enrique H. Davila, Honorato O. Colico, Nick Matias, Celso P. Templo, Franklin M. Littaua, Carlito Villanueva, Edmundo Q. Quiocho, and Tomas Orola. Not in photo are Henry Sy and Leonor M. O'Leary.

The Philippine Council of Management, the oldest and pioneering management organization in the Philippines, has lined up a series of seminars designed to focus on problems, threats, and opportunities of certain strategic and critical sectors.

Philcoman president Celso P. Templo said that post-seminar consulting services will be made available to participants who need assistance in conceptualizing their action plans and sourcing of financial and other resources needed by their company.

The seminars are: "Focus on Port Users: Threats and Opportunities" -- May 16 (Thursday) with Philcoman Governor Honorato O. Colico as seminar director; "Focus on Semi-Conductor Industry: Threats and Opportunities" -- June 18 (Tuesday), Chairman Pedrito Salvador, seminar director; "Labor-Management Relations: Issues, Problems and Solutions" -- July 16 (Tuesday), Governor Carlito Villanueva, seminar director; "Airline Operation: Asset Management and Sourcing of Financial Resources" -- July 16, Governor Enrique H. Davila, seminar director: "Entrepreneurship for SME's" -- Governor Odette Constantino, seminar director.

Interested parties may contact the Philcoman secretariat c/o iAME at Noli Santos International Tower, 1061 Metropolitan Avenue, near junction of Pasong Tamo and Vito Cruz Ext., San Antonio Village or contact through telephone numbers 896-23-55/56; or telefax 896-23-50/51/61 or e-mail: iame@pacific.net.ph.

International Management Congress 2004

The International Management Congress 2004 will be held on February 28, 2004 at the PICC with 2000 delegates all over the world expected to attend. Leading management gurus from US and Europe are being invited to deliver cutting-edge lectures. This was announced by Philcoman president Celso P. Templo, NAIA district collector of customs.

The Philcoman hosted the First International Management Conference on November 18-24, 1962 or some 40 years ago. It was attended by hundreds of delegates from US, Europe, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific region. Then President Diosdado Macapagal delivered the presidential message, while then Vice-President Emmanuel Pelaez delivered the keynote speech and as secretary of foreign affairs hosted a cocktail party at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, recalled Emmanuel T. Santos, Philcoman president emeritus and chairman-CEO of the iAcademy of Management and Economics.

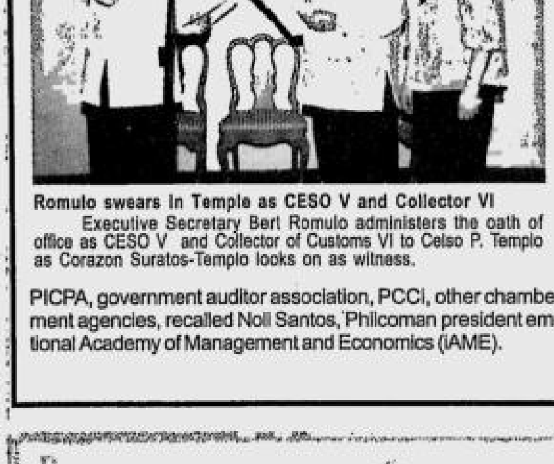
The International Management Congress 2004 is actually the second such international congress to be sponsored by the Philcoman. It is not a "historical accident," but something "providential" that it will be held under the second Macapagal presidency of the Philippines, said Nerza A. Rebustes, vice president for international affairs.

A special secretariat competent and appropriate to handle international event with the assistance of professional event managers is being organized even as invitations to hundreds of management organizations in US, Europe, and Asia-Pacific region are being sent out. Arrivals and departures at the NAIA are a "given" according to Vicki Collado, Philcoman secretary.

Interested parties who wish to participate or get involved in any manner may contact the International Secretariat c/o iAME at the Noli Santos International Tower, 1061 Metropolitan Avenue, near junction Pasong Tamo and Vito Cruz Ext., San Antonio Village, Makati or call telephones 896-23-55/56; telefax 896-23-50/51/61 or e-mail iame@pacific.net.ph.

34th National Management Congress

The 34th National Management Congress will be held on the last week of September 2002 at Manila Hotel with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo expected to deliver the keynote address. Leading management gurus from US and UK has been invited to deliver lectures on cutting-edge topics in management. This was announced by Nick Matias, vice president for national affairs and Congress chairman.



Romulo swears in Templo as CESO V and Collector VI
Executive Secretary Bert Romulo administers the oath of office as CESO V and Collector of Customs VI to Celso P. Templo as Corazon Suratos-Templo looks on as witness.

Company CEO's, COO's, other senior management, middle and frontline managers, government officials, entrepreneurs, academe, labor leaders, NGO's and civil society are welcome to attend as delegates to the 34th Management Congress, Philcoman President Celso P. Templo said.

The First National Management Congress was held in 1965 participated in as speakers and delegates by the officers and members of various management organizations such as the Management Association of the Philippines, the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines, the PICPA, government auditor association, PCCI, other chambers of commerce, academe, and government agencies, recalled Noli Santos, Philcoman president emeritus and chairman-CEO of the International Academy of Management and Economics (iAME).

Stolen artifacts seized at resort

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation confiscated around P5 million worth of artifacts from a diving resort owned by an American in Palawan earlier this month.

NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz said the bureau had charged American James Goll after his men retrieved the artifacts from Goll's Sea Dive Lodging and Restaurant in Poblacion, Coron.

Diaz said his men searched the American's beach resort after receiving reports from the National Museum that he was using it as a front to retrieve treasures from a nearby sunken galleon.

Goll's resort allegedly rented out diving equipment to its customers but then secretly used the equipment to dive for treasures from the galleon. The American allegedly sold the artifacts to dealers abroad.

Diaz added that the artifacts were mostly made of jars dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries.

He said his men raided the resort on March 2 after securing a search warrant from the Imus, Cavite regional trial court. The court has jurisdiction over Palawan, Diaz added.

Goll, who has stayed in the country for five years, was charged before the Department of Justice with violation of the National Treasures Law, which carries a penalty of two years' imprisonment.

Striking port workers get bolder, take over Dumaguete City pier

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—About 50 striking stevedores and arrastre workers surprised the port police on Wednesday dawn by barging through the gates and occupying one of the three piers.

The workers, belonging to the Cipres Stevedoring and Arrastre Incorporated Employees Union-Associated Labor Union, made the move even as the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) was still trying to iron out a compromise between the workers and the management.

Teodulo Paderes, port manager, said they were all caught by surprise by the move of the strikers.

"I was going around the pier area on a bicycle. I think I made two or three rounds, then suddenly I noticed that the strikers were already inside," he said.

Paderes said the strikers succeeded in entering in just 10 minutes. "It was very easy for them. It was peaceful and the resistance was minimum," he added.

Didith Sayson, ALU operations director for operations, said they had to penetrate the area because the strike would be inutile if done outside.

The workers staged a picket outside the port area for three days last week to protest alleged violations of their Collective Bargaining Agreement.

On March 15, officials of the Philippine Ports Authority ordered the strikers to step aside and allow cargo trucks to pass to restore normalcy to port operations.

Yesterday's entry of the strikers paralyzed the unloading operations of a container boat of Sulpicio Lines.

Mariano Ong, branch manager of Sulpicio Lines, said they decided not to unload eight container vans of sugar bound for Manila because of the work stoppage. ***With a report from Romy G. Amardo, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Mall, stores destroyed by fire; probers estimate damage at ₱B

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Fire gobbled up a shopping mall and five other commercial establishments in the business district here early yesterday, displacing more than a thousand workers.

No one was hurt, but the Bureau of Fire Protection estimated the damage at P1 billion.

The blaze, which lasted until noon yesterday, razed Kimball Plaza, Jollibee, Chowking, Majestic Shopping Center, Lim Bros Hardware and Dadiangas Glasswares.

Arson investigator SFO3 Romeo Pantoja told the INQUIRER that the fire started at the vertical clearance connecting Buildings 1 and 2 of Kimball Plaza, one of the four big shopping malls here on Pedro Acharon Boulevard and Papaya Street.

Firefighters immediately responded upon receiving a phone call at around 1:15 a.m. that a fire hit Kimball Plaza.

But the fire quickly spread, swallowing up the adjacent establishments.

It took more than four hours before firefighters from all over the South Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Sarangani-General Santos (Socsksargen) area were able to put the fire out.

Firefighters continued to douse water on the fire until noon yesterday.

More than 20 fire trucks from various fire stations in the Socsksargen area, including those of Dole Philippines and the Fil-Chinese Fire Brigades, came to help extinguish the fire.

Acting City Fire Marshall Insp. Charito Jover said they were still investigating the cause of the fire.

He said he would recommend the total demolition of the buildings gutted by fire to prevent these from collapsing.

"The remaining structures pose danger to the public. It should be demolished in order not to harm passersby or prospective scavengers. The foundations of these buildings were definitely weakened by the fire," Jover said.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. told the INQUIRER that it was still too early to conclude what really triggered the fire.

But he said it could also be possible that Kimball Plaza's electrical lines or connections suffered damages when an Intensity 6.8 quake struck the city on March 6.

The mayor shrugged off speculations that the fire could cause a slowdown in the local economy.

"Kimball Plaza is just one of the big shopping malls in the city. The incident may have an effect on the labor sector as a thousand workers were probably displaced. But I assure you that the local economy will continue to leap forward as fishing is the leading industry here," Acharon said. ***Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

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"That in all things God may be glorified."

Child abuse case in Baguio Chinese school raises questions on methods

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A child abuse complaint filed against a teacher of an 83-year-old Chinese-language school here has ignited a generation clash among the city's Chinese-Filipino community over modern teaching reforms.

Four 10-year-old pupils of the Baguio Patriotic High School allegedly swallowed pieces of chalk as punishment by elementary teacher Evangeline Magno on Feb. 20.

Lawyer Virginia Lim, the school director, said she had suspended Magno for a week following the scandal.

But the victims' parents, as well as a member of the school's board of directors, raised their complaints last week to the Department of Education and the National Bureau of Investigation.

A board director, an alumni, said the parents want to address the "rigidity and overt strictness" of the school.

"(We are complaining about) child abuse, yes. But more importantly, this (incident) tells us how badly we need reforms in our Chinese school. They still think they must treat Chinese kids this way, but these are modern times. The older (Chinese-Filipino) generations do not realize that the younger (generations) are already Filipinos. They don't know how we feel about this rigidity they always impose on our kids," the director told the INQUIRER in Filipino.

The director said this was the racial complication surrounding the modernization of the Baguio Patriotic School, which led last month to the "abuse of these four pupils" and which "should be addressed by holistic reforms in school policies and operation."

Ernesto Co, a victim's father and also an alumnus, said his son and the three other students vomited chalk in school, and had blamed Magno.

But Magno, in a handwritten explanation to Lim on Feb. 28, pointed out that a pupil, who was assigned school monitor, literally followed her instructions to feed chalk to misbehaving students, and enforced it on the four victims on Feb. 20.

"As a second parent and at the same time teacher, I wish to instill in my pupils the value of self-discipline . . . One is assigning monitors, especially if I am out of the classroom . . . That day, I told the assigned monitor to put chalk (in) the mouth (of) those who will talk, but my purpose was just to prevent them from making much noise and not to the extent of (actually enforcing) it," Magno said.

She claimed that the monitor took her instructions literally.

Co said the incident proved that the school's traditional Chinese teaching policy needed some changes. But he admitted that he never experienced any case of maltreatment as a student in the 1960s.

The school is the first exclusive Chinese-language school to operate here, which catered to a large migrant Chinese community during the American colonial period.

The bilingual Patriotic School is now run as a non-stock, non-profit corporation, manned by the city's Chinese-Filipino residents, and financed by grants and donations from the alumni.

Although representing only 12 percent of the city's 200,000 population, Chinese-Filipinos dominate business here, including downtown businesses along Session Road.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southeastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will experience rains and gusty winds. The rest of Visayas, Mindanao and Bicol regions will experience cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy.

source: pagasa

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi33° Lo 21°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 27° Lo 13°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 22°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 34° Lo 20°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 21°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 20°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 21°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 25°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Rains and gusty winds	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 36° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 35° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Rains and gusty winds	Hi 30° Lo 22°
Davao	Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/03/21/02

ROUNDUP

Tricycle collision kills 2

FLORIDABLANCA, Pampanga—A tricyle driver and a 2-year-old girl were killed while three others, including the girl's parents, were seriously hurt after two tricycles collided in Barangay Fortuna here on March 11. Killed were Cherry Swing and Marti Lalas, 18. Police said the girl and her parents, Cesar and Sheryl Swing, were on their way to the Romana Pangan Hospital aboard a tricycle driven by Lalas when another tricyle, driven by George Alipio, overtook another vehicle, hitting Lalas' tricycle. Alipio suffered burns after his tricycle exploded due to the collision.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Tribe honors PNP chief

SANTA FE, Nueva Vizcaya—Leaders of the Kalanguya tribe here declared Director General Leandro Mendoza, Philippine National Police chief, an adopted son and bestowed on him the Order of Kabigat, the highest honor given to a tribe member. Mendoza was honored during the tribe's three-day Kalanguya Festival and town anniversary. He gave P50,000 in cash as livelihood assistance for the Kalanguya tribe while Thompson Lantion, a retired police director in Cagayan Valley, donated P15,000 to a women's organization.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Appeal to Rotarians

BAGUIO CITY—Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz urged Rotarians during their 15th district convention here to work with the government to help the poor. De la Cruz, herself a Rotarian, said the government's agrarian reform program has not fully succeeded in emancipating farmers. The land parceled out to farmers under the agrarian reform law have been reacquired either by the moneyed previous owners or other entities and corporations, which now use them as industrial sites.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Science High in C. Luzon

CLARK FIELD, Pampanga—The Department of Science and Technology will establish a Philippine Science High School here next year. No specific date was given. Dr. Conrado Oliveros, DOST director in Central Luzon, said the science high school will be set up in a five-hectare area with a modern planetarium to attract tourists. He said the construction would start next year. City officials said the move would help poor students become competitive in science and technology.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

CIDG seizes pirated CDs

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) at Camp Olivas seized 500 units of pirated audio and video compact discs worth P25,000 from peddlers and sidewalk vendors here on Saturday. Chief Insp. Roger Brillantes, head of the CIDG's special action team, said this was part of the Videogram Regulatory Board's effort to enforce intellectual property rights.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Road network proposed

LUCENA CITY—A modern road network connecting Southern Luzon to Metro Manila has been proposed for construction in Quezon, Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. said here last week. Talaga reported that he had sought the assistance of President Macapagal-Arroyo on the building of an arterial road that will traverse Tiaong, Candelaria, Sariaya and Tayabas before reaching this city. Talaga said the proposed eight-lane, 45-km auxiliary road network, dubbed the Southern Tagalog Artillery Road I (Star I), would be connected to the Batangas national road system. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Early retirement favored

SAN PABLO CITY—An overwhelming number of priests in the Diocese of San Pablo, Laguna, have favored the proposal of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to lower the retirement age of parish priests from 75 to 65 years old. In a recent survey conducted among 110 priests in the diocese, only one vicariate signified opposition by abstaining in the voting, said Presbyteral Council secretary Fr. Cesar Gonzales. The present age of compulsory retirement enshrined in the Church's Code of Canon Law is 75.

Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Demolition tragedy

CALAMBA CITY—A pregnant woman lost her baby while three others were injured in a violent demolition of 24 houses that also damaged P5 million worth of property in Barangay Ambulong, this town, last Tuesday. A report from the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog identified the injured as Roberto Dumampo, Avedniego Malabanan, Bernie Claven and the pregnant woman, Esperanza Pebre. About 400 elements of the regional and provincial mobile group and various town police stations in Batangas and members of a demolition crew from Laguna and Manila demolished the houses that occupied a piece of land claimed by the Tuico family.

Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Post 'held' by 2 men leads to confusion

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—There appears to be two presidential assistants for Western Visayas.

So far, Malacañang has not issued a clarification on who between Rene Villa and Franklin Fuentebella should function as PA in the region.

Villa has been appointed PA for Western Visayas shortly after Ms Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency in January 2001.

But on Jan. 18, Fuentebella, a Macapagal ally in Negros Occidental, received his appointment papers from Malacañang, also as PA for the region.

Villa told the INQUIRER that on Feb. 18, he received an appointment as under-secretary for regional development. But, he added, Malacañang had not revoked his appointment as PA for Western Visayas.

Villa arrived in Bacolod on Tuesday to meet with Fuentebella so arrangements could be made to avoid confusion until Malacañang has clarified matter.

"I do not want to preempt the President because sometimes the communication coming from the Palace to me addresses me as presidential assistant," Villa said.

"The title is immaterial to me. My understanding is that Frank handles more political functions of the PA, and I, more developmental functions," he added.

But Villa said the problem was that Malacañang had not defined the functions that he and Fuentebella were supposed to carry out.

BEN MOSES EBREO

CITRUS FESTIVAL
A farmer brings his child to his display during a citrus festival in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, two years ago. This year, a similar festival is planned to draw attention to the problems plaguing the citrus industry in the province.

Couple held for P15,000 kidnapping

CEBU CITY—A couple who was accused of kidnapping their 3-year-old niece was arrested yesterday while about to disembark from a vessel at the pier in Iloilo City.

Nilo Tomacruz and his wife, Ivy, fled to Iloilo on Tuesday night shortly after they abandoned their niece at a gasoline station in Barangay Banilad, this city.

The suspects were expected to arrive in Cebu today to face charges of kidnapping with serious illegal detention, which the police planned to file against them.

Nilo is a native of Iloilo City. Ivy is the sister of the victim's mother. The couple had just arrived in Cebu a few days before they allegedly kidnapped the girl.

Chief Supt. Avelino Razon, police director for Central Visayas, said Nilo was a drug dependent who had a pending illegal drugs case in Iloilo.

Razon said Ivy allegedly talked the girl into eating chocolate at a store near her house in Villa Leyson, Barangay Bacayan, at about 11 a.m. Monday.

The parents immediately contacted their relative, Councilor Marlon Pacaña of Bantayan town, when they failed to find their daughter that night.

Pacaña, a reporter of radio station dyDD, sought Razon's help.

Nilo allegedly contacted the girl's parents at about 4 p.m. on Monday and demanded P200,000 in "financial assistance" in exchange for the girl's release.

But that night, Pacaña said the girl's parents gave P15,000 to the suspects through Nilo's Automated Teller Machine (ATM) card for their child's food.

The suspects, he added, were forced to release the girl on Tuesday night although no ransom had been paid after they felt pressured by radio reports that the police were after them.

Supt. Lani-O Nerez, city police chief, was informed past 6 p.m. on Tuesday that the girl was dropped off at a gas station in Barangay Banilad.

The couple went to the port and took an Iloilo-bound vessel. Police later received a tip that the couple had boarded a ship bound for Iloilo.

Razon immediately coordinated with the police in Iloilo, which led to the arrest of the couple. ***Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Court junks poll violation case vs Pacificador

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN JOSE, Antique—The Antique Regional Trial Court has dismissed a charge of violating election rules filed by the Commission on Elections against former assemblyman Arturo Pacificador.

In a five-page decision dated March 5 and promulgated Tuesday, Judge Rudy Castrojas of the RTC Branch 12 dismissed the case for lack of merit.

The case was filed shortly after the 1995 elections when Pacificador ran for representative of Antique's lone district against Rep. Exequiel Javier and Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez.

In its complaint filed on Jan. 29, 1996, the Comelec, represented by lawyer Jose Jalbuena, accused Pacificador of violating Sec. 24 of the Omnibus Election Code.

This provision enumerates the required information that a candidate should provide in filing a certificate of candidacy.

Jalbuena said Pacificador made "false or untruthful statements" when he declared in his certificate of candidacy that he was a registered voter of Precinct No. 26-A of Barangay La Paz, Hamtic town.

Registered voter

He said Pacificador was not a registered voter of the precinct when he executed under oath his certificate of candidacy on March 13, 1995, which he filed with the provincial election supervisor's office on March 20, 1995.

But Castrojas said the accusation against Pacificador was not a violation of election rules, even assuming that the information submitted by Pacificador was false.

He said the voting precinct of the candidate was not among the information required by the provision of the election law.

Pacificador said he was "vindicated" by the ruling. He accused former Comelec chair and Supreme Court Associate Justice Bernardo Pardo of "persecuting" him.

Pardo, citing "security and practical" reasons, issued an order on May 6, 1995, prohibiting Pacificador from voting in Precinct No. 27-A in Barangay La Paz, Hamtic during the May 8 elections.

Pacificador, who was then detained at the police provincial headquarters at Bugante Point here, said only the Supreme Court had the right to strip a person's right to vote.

Loss

The former assemblyman also blamed his loss in the elections to Pardo's order.

He said Pardo had the case filed against him in retaliation for a case he filed before the Ombudsman after the 1995 elections accusing Pardo of graft. The Ombudsman, however, dismissed the case in 1996 for lack of jurisdiction.

Despite the dismissal of the election violation case, Pacificador remains detained at the provincial jail.

He is facing murder, frustrated murder and attempted murder charges along with 16 others for the murder of former Gov. Evelio Javier and the wounding of several others.

Lapid tells Erap to go on exile, give GMA rest

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Gov. Manuel Lapid said the Macapagal administration would enjoy a respite from political unrest if jailed former President Joseph Estrada were allowed to go on exile abroad.

"I favor his exile so that there would be peace in our country," Lapid told the INQUIRER.

Estrada was Lapid's political mentor in the Nationalist People's Coalition and his friend in show business.

If Estrada leaves, President Macapagal-Arroyo could focus on pressing national concerns such as poverty alleviation, the core program of her administration, Lapid said.

"(President Macapagal-Arroyo) can focus on her programs because criticisms from Estrada and his supporters would stop once the government allows him exile," Lapid said in Filipino.

But Lapid expressed sympathy for Estrada, saying that living in exile would be difficult for someone like the former actor.

In Clark last week, Ms Macapagal did not give a definitive stance on whether she favored exile for her predecessor. But she told representatives of official development assistance donor-countries that she would not tolerate Estrada's "political posturings" in the courtroom to trigger public disorder and undermine the justice system.

"Some sectors are trying to create an impression that the government is being wishy-washy in dealing with the political posturings of Estrada. I firmly dispel any impression that there is any strategy of appeasement or compromise on this matter," Ms Macapagal said in a speech last week during the consultative group meeting.

"But when there is a brazen attempt to destroy the credibility and functionality of any court of justice, this calls for concerned action by all institutions of democratic government and all the citizens of the democratic system," she said.

In Vigan City, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, said Estrada was suffering from karma and is experiencing the repercussions of his previous actions.

"*Nakakarma na siya*," Singson said on Monday. "During his impeachment trial, he was saying that due process must be followed. Now that we are observing due process, he refuses to abide by it," Singson said.

But Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson, the former governor's estranged cousin, said Estrada was just voicing his views based on the court's actions.

"It is the former president's natural reaction. He feels that he is not guilty and he believes that the court is not being fair. So, being in a hopeless situation, he said '*bahala na kayo*,'" said Eric Singson, president of the Northern Luzon Bloc in the House of Representatives. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Unmasking the Moriones

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Gasan, Marinduque

FOR LOCAL or foreign tourists, one of the must destinations during the Holy Week is heart-shaped Marinduque at the core of the tranquil Tayabas Bay.

The island-province is famous for a stirring depiction of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, dubbed the Moriones Festival (from the word "*morion*" which means mask or visor).

The religious practice has developed and become a tourist come-on through the years. According to the Moriones Internet files, the celebration is described in this sequence:

"On Holy Monday, '*morions*' roam the streets of Boac, Mogpog and Gasan towns. They play pranks on the townspeople, serenade ladies, frighten children and sometimes engage in mock sword fight.

"The highlight of the festival takes place on the eve of Black Saturday, when the story of a Roman soldier named Longinus is reenacted in a pantomime by the bank of the Boac River.

"A merry chase between the centurion and the other *morions* takes place to the delight of the onlookers. The story ends with the eventual capture and beheading of the Roman warrior."

The Moriones is a weeklong religious show depicted through a street play that unfolds before gawking locals and foreign tourists. It is a yearly cycle of deep, cultural and pious rituals that often leave the islanders and their visitors rich in spirituality but drained physically.

And as the exhausting trip happens yearly, Gasan now offers a more down-to-earth capping of the Lenten season on Easter Sunday. It aims to wash away fatigue with a promise of a great relaxing spectacle from a colorful street-dancing parade and other wind-up activities yet without easing the religious tones of the colorful event.

"We have observed from past Lenten seasons that the tourists were only after the Moriones; after that, no more. For the visitors, their stay on the island begins and ends with the festival. So this time, we have cooked up something different to make their stay more prolonged and unforgettable," Gasan Mayor Vicky Lao Lim said.

'Gasang-Gasang'

Named the "Gasang-Gasang Festival" by the multisectoral Gasan Culture and Arts Foundation (Gascuaf), the visitors, according to the project proponents, may expect to see a livelier and never-before-seen Easter Sunday event on the island.

The festival will be highlighted by the "*moryonan* street dancing" to be participated in by at least 2,000 revelers from the town's 25 barangays, schools and private groups.

Gasan was derived from the Tagalog word *gasang*, a term for corals or broken pieces of corals and seashells that are believed to be abundant along the seashore of the town.

Residents of the picturesque coastal municipality hope to lure a new batch of annual habitues from among tourists that traditionally descend on the island.

The festival organizers are targeting a part of the annual Lenten visitors through their distinct cultural history and still unexplored eco-tourism potentials.

"But we have problems in accommodation and facilities. We're short of air-conditioned rooms and other function areas for visitors. However, since there is a dearth of foreign tourists due to security concerns, we're only targeting local tourists," Lim said.

According to her, the Gasan community has allowed more creative freedom for "*moryonan*" participants in the design of their costumes and masks to ensure wider participation.

An agro-industrial fair will showcase native food and handicraft items.

Coronation

Aside from the spectacle of the traditional *pugutan* (beheading) stage presentation on Black Saturday, the town's visitors will be feted with a grand welcome ritual fit for a visiting royalty through the holding of the native *putungan* (coronation) amid the rhythmic clop and crack of a *kulatang* band.

Kulatang is a wooden musical instrument indigenous to Gasan. *Putong* is a piece of cloth wrapped around the head worn by prehispanic Filipinos, which signifies their social class.

Lim revealed that *putungan* is Marinduque's unique custom of welcoming and honoring friends and visitors.

During the recent visit to the town of Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina, head of the military's Southern Luzon Command, and several journalists from Quezon, the Gaseños welcomed the military official with the *putungan* ritual.

The ceremony starts with the *mamumutong*, a group of men and women who pray and perform song-and-dance greetings in honor of the guest, to the rhythmic tempo of the *kulatang*.

The *kulatang* consists of two pieces of wood from the *bayog* or *watingan* tree, graduated in size to produce different notes.

A band of 10 to 12 people performs, accompanied by at least four stringed instruments to produce more lively and indigenous music.

Carolina was capped with a crown made from indigenous *nito* vines and was offered flowers and garlands or bouquets amid the shower of coins symbolizing wishes of prosperity, good health and God's abundant grace.

The whole performance lasted about 20 minutes. Shouts of "*Mabuhay!*" and "*Viva!*" ended the ceremony.

Lost in history

Josefa Mendita, 71, one of the *mamumutong*, said she has been dancing the ritual for the past 50 years. But just like any islander, she could not tell the history of the ceremony.

"I just learned the basic steps of the *putungan* from my grandmother," she said.

Even historical accounts could not determine the exact origin of the *putong*. Nevertheless, according to Gaseños, the *putungan* will always be a welcome experience for any visitor in Marinduque and will always cherish the unforgettable memory of being treated as an honored guest.

But for Gasan officials, the project is not only confined to the Lenten season and does not end on Easter Sunday. Lim said the "Gasang-Gasang Festival" would also serve as a natural launching pad for related projects of the municipal government this year.

"New interest is likewise being generated by private groups on Gasan's precolonial past," the mayor said.

She recalled that the first recorded archeological expeditions in the country's history dealt extensively with artifacts from Gasan and the largest of the Tres Reyes Islands off the coast of the town.

A MORIONES Festival participant.

FILE PHOTO

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2,665 US troops arriving

From page A1

the other countries similar to the VFA.

For now, troops from other countries can only get close to the Balikatan exercises as "observers."

'Behind people's back'

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla (Nueva Vizcaya), Assistant Minority Leader Abraham Mitra (Palawan) and Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada Jr. said that if the ongoing Balikatan 02-1 in Basilan was governed by Terms of Reference, a corresponding TOR should be drawn up for Balikatan 02-2 because of the large number of participating US troops.

Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran rejected the two Balikatan exercises outright and accused the government of helping the United States set up new military bases in Southern Mindanao.

But President Macapagal-Arroyo said the impending arrival of thousands of US troops should not alarm the public because this was part of the joint war games regularly held under the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

She said those protesting the US troops' arrival were the same "anti-American" groups that objected to the VFA.

"These are the people who are always criticizing the Balikatan, the VFA, which the Supreme Court has upheld as constitutional," she said. "These are the anti-Americans, and we have to live with that."

The President said as many as 5,000 US troops were arriving in one year for the Balikatan exercises.

"That is why we are saying that this is not (anything) new because we have the VFA," she told Bombo Radyo.

Ms Macapagal said she had yet to decide whether she would also seek a TOR for Balikatan 02-2. She said she only insisted on a TOR for Balikatan 02-1 to allay fears that the US troops would engage in combat with the Abu Sayyaf.

Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, chided protest groups for opposing the President's decision to let US troops take part in joint operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

Such critics are ignoring the "overwhelming" support for the US assistance in the fight against the bandit group, Quevedo said in a statement.

He said the anti-US protests were turning "a molehill into a mountain."

But Beltran said there was no more doubt that the US troops were here to advance American economic and political interests in Southeast Asia, and not to train Filipinos to stamp out the Abu Sayyaf.

He accused the administration of colluding with the United States to reestablish US military bases "behind the people's back."

Troops to converge in Mindanao?

Adan had announced that 1,700 US troops would be coming for Balikatan 02-2. There is also a proposal for the deployment of 300 more US troops in Basilan, where there are already 660 US soldiers.

"*Parami nang parami* (the number is getting bigger)," Padilla said, theorizing that the reason authorities did not want a TOR for the military exercise in Central Luzon was "all US forces will eventually converge in Mindanao."

"If there's no TOR for Luzon, it would be easier for them to transfer the US forces to Mindanao," he told the INQUIRER.

Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson for the President, was quoted as saying Tuesday that Balikatan 02-2 did not require a TOR, unlike Balikatan 02-1 that was being held in an "area of conflict."

But Padilla said: "If you required a TOR for Mindanao, I don't see why it should not be applicable in Luzon."

Lozada said that a TOR was necessary for the Balikatan in Luzon, and that the government should explain its position.

"Exercises like these should be governed by guidelines all the time," said Lozada, chair of the House foreign relations committee that is set to resume its inquiry on the Balikatan.

According to Mitra, a TOR is necessary for Balikatan 02-2 especially if, as some reports have it, the exercise will involve troops from other countries like South Korea and Malaysia.

"If a large number of troops are involved that it would require expanded guidelines, if there would be a quantum leap, (then we should ask) for ground rules," Mitra said.

He added that there should be "different rules for different war exercises."

Intriguing

Lozada said the imminent arrival of thousands of US troops was "intriguing" because 'they are coming one (Balikatan) after another."

"What is the gravity of terrorist infiltration in our country?" he said. "Have we become the second Afghanistan?"

He said the US government should disclose its "geo-political game plan" because the Philippines was appearing to be "a staging ground for other countries."

Both Padilla and Beltran agreed with this observation.

"Even before the coming of American troops, there were reports that General Santos City was being set up as a possible base for US operations," Padilla said, adding:

"All of these indicate the growing interest of Americans in Mindanao, and, as I said before, the agenda is not just combat operations but something big."

Beltran said that after US bases and troops were banned in the Philippines, the United States used the Agency for International Development to build a "massive new naval and air base in Southern Mindanao."

He and Padilla were referring to the international airport and related facilities in General Santos.

"Now the troops have begun to come in so that they can begin using the bases and continue the American government's campaign of global military aggression and economic hegemony," Beltran said in a statement.

He expressed support for calls by several members of Congress to investigate the continuing US presence in the country.

"The US troops have been here for more than two months already but they have not helped the AFP capture the (Abu Sayyaf) and rescue its hostages," he said. "So far, the American troops appear to be here to conduct covert operations on their own and to flaunt their weapons in public."

Hostile action

Victoriano Lecaros, spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs, said no TOR was required for Balikatan 02-2 because there was no "threat of hostile action" in Luzon.

"The TOR governing the 660 US troops and 3,800 Filipino soldiers was put in place to allay fears that the Americans will engage in combat operations, considering that the exercise sites are near the combat zone areas in Basilan," he said.

But in the case of Luzon, he said, the threat and the risk of encountering the Abu Sayyaf bandits was nonexistent.

Asked if the New People's Army could not be considered a real threat, he said: "The communist NPAs have been there for so long. They are no threat."

Lecaros stressed that the TOR governing Balikatan 02-01 came about upon the insistence of Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr.

He said Guingona wanted to make sure that the Americans were not out to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf bandits, whom the Philippine military were considering a "domestic problem." ***With reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Christine Herrera***

'They will pay for everything'

By Martin P. Marfil

AMERICAN engineers will do civic work in Basilan because the United States will pay for the projects, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said yesterday.

Golez was explaining the controversial proposal to deploy 300 more US troops, ostensibly to put up roads, piers and possibly a runway on the impoverished island.

"They will pay for everything and Filipino engineers will work with them, so there will be training involved. This will benefit one of the poorest provinces in the country," Golez said when asked why the proposal called for the deployment of American, and not Filipino, engineers.

The proposal has drawn objections from various sectors. Yesterday, the Church group Cry Out Now! raised fears that the additional deployment would result in the permanent stay here of US military forces.

"Just like in Vietnam, the conduct of medical missions and civic action in so-called Balikatan exercises is being used as a convenient cover for a bigger number of US troops to stay indefinitely and even permanently in the country," said Fr. Allan Arcebuche, OFM, national spokesperson of the anti-Balikatan network of Church people.

Arcebuche said, "a long-term US military buildup in the guise of building roads or conducting medical missions" was unacceptable.

"Poor Filipinos certainly need improved infrastructure and delivery of free medicine and basic social services, but we don't need foreign troops to do the duties of the local and national governments," he said in a statement.

Calls have been made for new terms of reference to include the proposed deployment because the TOR covering Balikatan 02-1 limit the number of US troops to 660 and set a six-month period for the exercise.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday said there was a need to amend the TOR, while National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the civic-action component could be incorporated in "Operation Gentle Wind."

"This is a non-military exercise, a civic action exercise that can be absorbed as part of 'Gentle Wind' because the idea is to bring in military engineers and medical people (who) are ideal (for) high-risk areas," Golez said.

Reyes admitted that Balikatan 02-1 was a "special" exercise. "The only reason we affixed '02-1' is, as I have said, it was not programmed," he said. ***With a report from Armand Nocum***

'Mad' woman drove this seminarian . . .

From page A1

(Danilo) and another brother left the seminary.

But Red, according to Danilo, was able to convince their parents about his plans. Eventually, his parents supported him.

"Whatever happened, I still love you all and I will remain here as your son," Danilo quoted his younger brother as saying to their parents at the time.

In Ateneo, Red learned to love the law profession.

"The intricacies of the law and law practice attract me. Law (profession) is really challenging and lawyers plays very active role in molding a good government and society," Red said.

As a "poor" law student in Ateneo, Red recalled that he did not go with his well-to-do classmates in their extra-curricular activities. Red did not even join fraternity groups. He just concentrated on his studies.

But Red served as president of the Ateneo Law School choir because he loves to sing, a talent he inherited from his family.

Inspiration

Red considers his determination and hard work the key to his success. "My only inspiration in life is my not being rich, so I have to work hard. My elder siblings supported me in my studies," he said.

Although Red went to law school as a scholar, his other expenses were shouldered by his siblings and a priest, who is their neighbor in Leyte. Red said he also had to work in a corporate consultancy firm to help finance his law studies.

"We are very proud of you," Danilo said. But he also said that Red could still become a priest.

Red admitted that he was overjoyed upon learning that he landed in the Top 10 of the 2001 bar exams. "I did not expect this, really. I studied hard and I prayed even harder," he said in Manila.

No phone at home

Red said he could not immediately share his success with his family because, he said, "we don't have a telephone at home."

"They just heard it on the radio, and they were overwhelmed as I am. I just hope I could talk to them right now," he said.

Even if he did not become a priest, Red has decided to make public service his career goal. He told radio station dyLA that he planned to join either the judiciary or the Solicitor General's Office. "But this will come maybe after 10 years of my private practice," he said.

Red plans to continue working for a law firm in Manila for two years. Then he would establish his own law firm either in Cebu or in Leyte to serve his "*kababayan* (countrymen)."

He said poor people could expect free service from him because money was not his priority but "public service."

For his part, Gutierrez has no specific plans after passing the bar.

Gutierrez said his inspiration was his family in Cebu who was very happy upon learning the good news. He attributed his success to prayers.

His father had informed Gutierrez that he was No. 3. But the son remained skeptical so he went to the Supreme Court to verify the results himself.

"I was so happy because I was only expecting to pass the bar exams but then, God gave me this," he said.

Get married

His mother, Marlina congratulated his son over dyLA. But she has one message for her son—get married so she can have grandchildren.

"I wish him all the luck in the world for being a bar topnotcher. But my two children, he and my daughter, remain single. So maybe it's high time for him to have his own family," Marlina said.

Gutierrez, who was listening on the other line, merely laughed. "I supposed that time (the decision to get married) will just come," he said.

Gutierrez, a certified public accountant, finished his undergraduate degree at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. He is now with the Quisumbing Torres law office. ***With a report from Michael Lim Ubac***

Bar topnotcher willing to take Erap as client if. . .

By Norman Bordadora

BAR topnotcher Rodolfo Ma. Ponferrada is willing to take on former President Joseph Estrada's cases on two conditions—that he is innocent and that the trial be freed from media and political hype.

"Realistically, it's up to the law firm to accept the case of the former President. But for a young lawyer, it would be a great challenge," the 25-year-old Ponferrada said.

Ponferrada, who confesses to not having the time to read the morning papers and to catch the late night news, found it distressing that Estrada attacked the judiciary and his followers questioned its integrity.

"It's disheartening. The former President's advisers, some of whom are lawyers, should not have questioned the integrity of the Sandiganbayan and the Supreme Court publicly," Ponferrada told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"Still, I don't think he wants my services. He already has brilliant lawyers around him," Ponferrada said.

Ponferrada, who topped his class at the UP College of Law last year, is the son of Judge Rodolfo Ponferrada of the Manila Regional Trial Court and Judge Thelma Ponferrada of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Jesus Paolo Protacio, Ateneo School of Law's own valedictorian and second placer in the bar exams, agrees.

"Erap shouldn't say things like that. The judiciary is the last resort. If the other branches of government oppress you, you run to the courts. If your fellow man does you wrong, you run to the courts," Protacio said.

"Once you take away the confidence of the people in the justice system, people will take the law in their own hands. That will be chaotic. Considering the influence (Estrada) holds over our countrymen, he really should be careful," Protacio said.

Fixers making . . .

From page A1

the DFA charges for regular passport processing.

The fixers' come-on? Applicants are assured of passports in three days, compared with the DFA's extended processing period of eight days because of the shortage.

If the fixers fail to deliver, they simply put the blame on the DFA, Lecaros said.

The DFA daily allocates 1,500 passports to travel agencies and 2,000 to individual applicants.

A fixer gets P300 of the P1,500 paid by each applicant victimized, Lecaros said. That means a fixer who "recruits" five applicants easily makes P1,500 in a few hours.

No jurisdiction

But the DFA is helpless to prevent fixers from victimizing passport applicants, particularly those from the provinces, Lecaros said.

He said that while fixers were "not allowed within 100 meters" of the DFA premises, the queue was usually so long that the applicants were ending up right where fixers were waiting.

"Outside of the premises, the DFA has no jurisdiction already, and we can't do anything about that," he said. "We just have to warn the public not to bite the fixers' offer."

Lecaros said the Pasay City government was helping prevent fixers from plying their trade.

But who are expected to arrest them? A fixer who spoke with the INQUIRER on condition of anonymity said travel agencies were also paying policemen protection money.

And applicants cannot exactly be faulted for doing business with fixers. Not when the DFA consular staff simply turns them away as soon as the daily quota of 2,000 has been met, and tells them to just come back the next day.

Scheduling system

Lecaros said the system became complicated because the DFA had yet to implement the "appointment scheduling system," wherein the day's Applicant No. 2,001 is automatically first priority the following day.

Elmer Cato, head of the DFA Regional Consular Office in Pampanga, said his office had a one-month backlog despite the implementation of the appointment scheduling system there.

Cato raised the need for additional personnel, saying he had a staff of only 13, each of whom processes 48 passport applications daily.

He said his office needed 30 more consular personnel to remedy the backlog.

Lecaros said at least 40 personnel would be hired soon to help ease the backlog at the DFA main office.

As far as the passport shortage is concerned, "the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the DFA are doing their best to produce the needed number of booklets to cover the huge demand," he said. "It is quite alarming, but we hope that it will not come to a point that not one passport will be issued in a day. The BSP and DFA are trying to work out the kinks."

Lecaros also said the three-month buffer stock of passports supposedly good up to May had been used up.

He said the BSP had been delivering stocks on time but was asked to speed up delivery of the remaining 34 percent of the 800,000 passports, and to advance the printing of the second order of 1.2 million.

President's pets commissioned into 'military service'

From page A1

Mr. Arroyo handed out the diplomas to the four-legged graduates, among them the First Family's very own pets: Moises, a Dalmatian; Laby, a golden retriever; and Du, a Rottweiler.

"These 'bomb dogs' are trained to detect a wide array of explosives—from C-4, TNT, ammonium nitrate to even small ammunition," Lt. Cmdr. Rommel Jason Galang said.

Starting today, the First Family will have their own dogs do the bomb sniffing in the inner sanctum of Malacañang.

Galang is commanding officer of the K-9 unit of the elite Presidential Security Group (PSG), which commissioned into "military service" Moises, Laby and Du, along with nine other dogs.

Arroyo gave the 12 dogs by way of their mouths their certificates of training, diplomas rolled inside rubber and vinyl tubes.

"Our dogs are trained to function in a wide array of areas like hotels, airports and planes," Galang said.

Galang said the PSG had to request from the Armed Forces of the Philippines serial numbers for the dogs because they are considered part of the military.

Galang showed an area where they plan to bury their bomb dogs when they die. The place is tentatively called "Libingan ng mga Asong Bayani."

Moises, Laby and Du were handpicked by dog trainers of the Presidential Security Guard (PSG) from the kennel of the First Family who are known dog lovers.

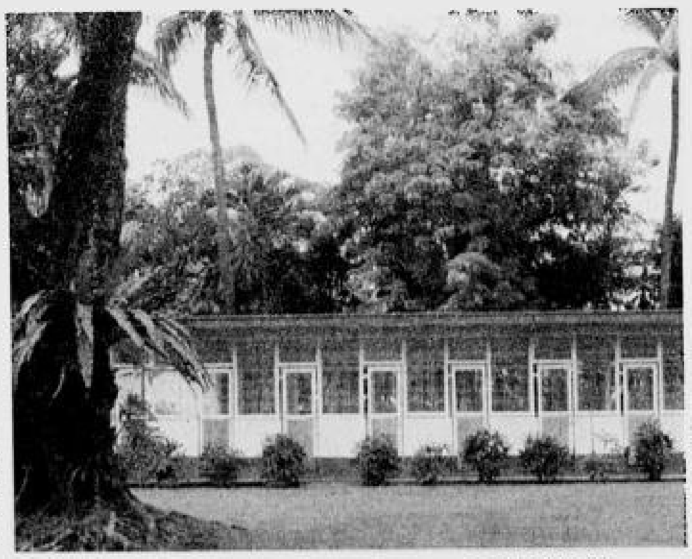
Bark in envy

They were trained for four months at the K-9 unit's compound, dubbed Home of the Sniffers, inside Malacañang Park.

The presidential "friends" live in cages that should make the ordinary Filipino who can only dream of the lowest low-cost housing—a government model costing P25,000—to bark in envy.

Construction of cages and a training fence for the dogs cost the government P257,165.50, according to a report published in the PSG Trooper, the PSG's official publication.

A row of sturdy metal cages can be seen at one side of the Palace, housing a pack of fierce-looking K-9 breed dogs trained to detect explosives and drugs.



DOG HOUSE at the Palace has a price tag of P257,165.50.

EDWIN BACASMAS

"The dogs are very important in sanitizing and securing an area before a presidential visit, especially in urban poor districts," an INQ7.net source said.

Many of these dogs, according to the source, were "donated" by the Armed Forces to the PSG. It could not be confirmed, however, if these were the same dogs that were bought at P2 million each by then AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes, and approved by then Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado.

Multimillion canines

Last year, a complaint was filed with the Ombudsman against Reyes and Mercado for buying eight K-9 breed dogs for P16.7 million—P16 million for the dogs and P700,000 for equipment.

Reyes and Mercado have denied the charges and justified the purchase of the dogs—that they were needed in the military operations in Basilan. INQ7.net sources in the military, however, could not also confirm if these P2million each dogs were among the canines deployed in Basilan, which get a daily food allowance of P300 each. Soldiers only get P90 daily, or P30 per meal.

In a speech before the Makati Business Club two months ago, Ms Macapagal urged the business leaders for help in providing housing for the poor either by donating cash or volunteering to build one.

She offered them two options: The Habitat house which costs P85,000 or the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) model, which costs P25,000.

Among the PSG Logistics projects accomplished during the year, the construction of the K-9 training fence and dog cages ranked third in cost, following the renovation of the PSG headquarters and barracks, which cost P554,441.50, and the renovation of the Kabuhayan Building, at P341,473.30.

Before they were trained, the PSG's K-9 unit was using its army of dogs on rotation basis to sniff out explosives inside Malacañang.

"The three dogs owned by the First Family will now do that exclusively for Malacañang," Galang said.

The dogs were trained to respond to mostly German commands like "obligen," meaning to take a rest.

Galang said the performance of the three dogs of the First Family would be evaluated after two months.

The 12 dogs were the third batch trained by the PSG's K-9 unit, which used to rely on donated dogs that were trained elsewhere.

The PSG has Dutch shepherds, Labrador retrievers and Belgian malinois in its own kennel.

The unit had previously sent its dog trainers to a known canine academy in Alabama to gain expertise in training and handling canines.

Because Health Matters...

Sleep I Need

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PHILIPPINES
and
St. Luke's
Medical Center
COMPREHENSIVE SLEEP DISORDERS CENTER
celebrate

INTERNATIONAL SLEEP WELL DAY

March 21, 2002

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
France, Belgium,
Switzerland, Italy, Portugal,
Spain, Greece,
the Czech Republic,
Hungary, Austria,
Russia, South Africa, Mexico,
Brazil, Chile, Colombia, China,
Morocco, Tunisia,
Israel, Lebanon, Japan,
Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan
Hong Kong and the Philippines

MALACAÑAN PALACE, MANILA

I GREET the officers and staff of Sanofi-Synthelabo and St. Luke's Medical Center for spearheading meaningful sleep awareness activities to celebrate the First International Sleep Well Day in the country with other Asian neighbors such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

I note your relentless efforts in raising public consciousness on the importance of sleep to health and productivity. Sleep is an integral part of life and is important for mental alertness, performance at work and general health. Your initiative in conducting an information campaign on the vital need of sleep complements our government's health care programs.

My Administration recognizes the vital role that Filipino health care organizations play in safeguarding the health of our people. We stand to prosper as a people and as a country if every Filipino is given easy access to quality healthcare.

I congratulate those who are behind this noble undertaking. I therefore wish the success of the first-ever observance of International Sleep Day in the Philippines and enjoin your organizations to persevere in the thrust to produce a healthier and more productive Filipino citizenry.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MY WARMEST felicitations to the organizers of the first ever International Sleep Well Day celebration in the country.

Sleep is one of the physiological processes that people often take for granted unless they are, in one way or another, functionally affected by disturbance in their sleeping patterns. Celebrating this significant event is one sure step towards raising awareness on the importance of sleep in relation to one's health.

Establishing the vital relationship between sleep and productivity is another good reason for creating greater awareness on this project. The unwanted physical, mental and behavioral effects of the lack of sleep or a disturbed sleep, will definitely have an impact on the productivity of our country's workforce, eventually affecting the over-all socioeconomic development of our country.

I therefore would like to commend the Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center of the St. Luke's Medical Center, the International Foundation for Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, the Philippine Society of Sleep Medicine and Sanofi-Synthelabo for collaborating together in the conduct of lay forum sessions and insomnia clinics in response to the need to address sleep disorders as well as increase public awareness on the importance of sleep.

May all these efforts translate to greater progress and productivity for our country as we aim for sustainable development by eradicating poverty and improving the state of health and well-being of our people.

Congratulations for your pioneering efforts and *Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

MANUEL M. DAYRIT, MD, MSc
Secretary of Health

St. Luke's
Medical Center

I AM inviting everyone to join us in the celebration of International Sleep Well Day. This day is dedicated to the celebration of sleep and life.

"Open your eyes to sleep." Today, we give attention to an important aspect of life, as important as drinking or breathing. In celebrating this auspicious occasion, we will be conducting a lay forum on insomnia at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. This is a first step towards our consciousness to sleep.

The Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center at St. Luke's Medical Center was established in 1992. It is a center dedicated to the management of different sleep disorders. The center has a multidisciplinary team approach to sleep disorders composed of a neurologist, pulmonologist, psychiatrist and otorhinolaryngologist. It has the experience and expertise to deal with sleep problems of all kinds.

Lastly, I would like to thank Sanofi-Synthelabo Phils., Inc. for spearheading this important activity dedicated to improving the lot of our fellowmen with sleep problems.

Again, let's all celebrate sleep to celebrate life.

MA. FELICIDAD A. SOTO, MD
Head, Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center

What is sleep?

WE all feel that "we need to sleep". Yet no explanation is widely accepted as to why humans need to sleep. Perhaps sleep evolved as a way to remain quiet and thus protected during the night. Perhaps we need to sleep in order to dream. Individuals who are prevented from dreaming become anxious and irritable. Perhaps sleep clears our minds, leaving our brains "clear" for new learning.

Different people apparently need different amounts of sleep; some may go to bed late and awaken late (owls), while others go to bed early and awaken early (larks).

The question why we need sleep remains a mystery. Through the years, understanding of physical processes associated with sleep has increased immensely and there are objective recordings of events of sleep that forms the basis for both clinical and theoretical work in the area.

As well as being a vital necessity, sleep is an essential component of health. The obvious effects of human sleep deprivation are on behavior, because the cerebrum needs to sleep and cannot obtain any rest during wakefulness. If such rest is required for the recovery and restitution of neural related tissues, then sleep is the only provider of this facility.

We can say that sleep is a process by which the whole body, including the central nervous system, can be refreshed. There is also evidence that materials learned during the day is "consolidated" throughout a night's sleep and that it may be recalled better the next morning; however, it is now clear whether it is a sleep-related phenomenon or simply represents the absence of interference from new memories.

We therefore do not sleep for sleep's sake, but in order to be alert and refreshed the next day; sleep (and its alteration) affects individual wellbeing and quality of life.

> The obvious effects of human sleep deprivation are on behavior, because the cerebrum needs to sleep and cannot obtain any rest during wakefulness

Open your eyes to sleep

WE sleep without thinking about it – and that's the problem. Sleep affects our mood, our energy, our capacity to concentrate and even our memories of the past. So let's take a closer look at this mysterious yet fascinating phenomenon.

Sleep is vital to our lives. Yet we often don't sleep enough. The lucky ones fall asleep easily, never feel terribly tired when they wake up, never find themselves nodding off during the day or get irritable due to lack of sleep. They are the five percent of people who claim never to have sleep problems. At the other end of the spectrum, there are the 20 to 30 percent of adults who suffer from more or less serious insomnia, and two out of three of them never bother to treat it.

This negligence can have a huge impact on both the individual and on society. Lack of daytime wakefulness can lead to failure at school and absenteeism, as well as serious accidents.

That is why on March 21 last year, International Sleep Well Day was organized in many different countries worldwide. In most participating countries, doctors, pharmacists and experts went on a campaign trail and set the scene for awareness sessions on insomnia.

Sleeping badly does not have to be something you have to put up with.

21 MARCH 2002: A day to help us sleep better

Today's activities

Kamia Room, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel
Mandaluyong,
Metro Manila
11 AM – Media Briefing on Insomnia
3 PM – Sleep Experts' Hour: a Lay Forum on Sleep Awareness

St. Luke's Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center

THE COMPREHENSIVE Sleep Disorders is one of the specialized center services of the St. Luke's Medical Center's Institute for Neurosciences. The Center is fully computerized and complete in facilities acceptable to world standards. It has both the experience and the expertise to treat all kinds of sleep disorders.

The Center introduces its Insomnia Treatment Program, a comprehensive approach using a broad range of treatment modalities with proven efficacy. According to Dr. Ruby Manalastas, Insomnia Treatment Program Head, it is not enough to treat the symptom (insomnia). Instead, the focus should be on what is causing it. It can be physical, psychological, environmental or the effects of aging on sleep. The 6-week program targets the symptom (insomnia) and the complications (such as negative conditioning, maladaptive thoughts and behavior), which exacerbates the sleep disruption.

FROM left: Rolando dela Vega, M.D., Consultant; Ruth Divinagracia, M.D., Consultant; Ma. Felicidad Soto, M.D., Section Head; Ruby Manalastas, M.D., Consultant; not in photo: Mercy Gappi, M.D., Consultant

The Insomnia Treatment Program is one of the service packages of the Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center. The Center offers a multidisciplinary team approach to sleep disorders. The team is composed of neurologists, pulmonologists, pediatric-pulmonogists, psychiatrists and otorhinolaryngologists, all of whom are board certified in their fields of specialty with a common subspecialty in Sleep Medicine.

For more information, call Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center at 723-0301 / 723-0101 locals 5559 and 4729.

Patients... on their insomnia

"I get insomnia... I suppose everyone does... (*a Spanish patient*)

"One visit to the doctor in five is for insomnia. That's a lot!... (*GP*)

"I sometimes wake up at 2 or 3 a.m. and then can't get back to sleep... (*bank employee*)

"Insomnia is a real poison. It was a vicious circle" (*air hostess*)

"You get completely out of synchro..." (*baker*)

"It unbalances your life. At the end of a day's driving, your reactions and reflexes are slower... (*taxi driver*)

"After 24 hours on the job, you have a sudden, irresistible urge to sleep..." (*a security officer*)

Congratulations to the officers and members of the newly-formed Philippine Society of Sleep Medicine

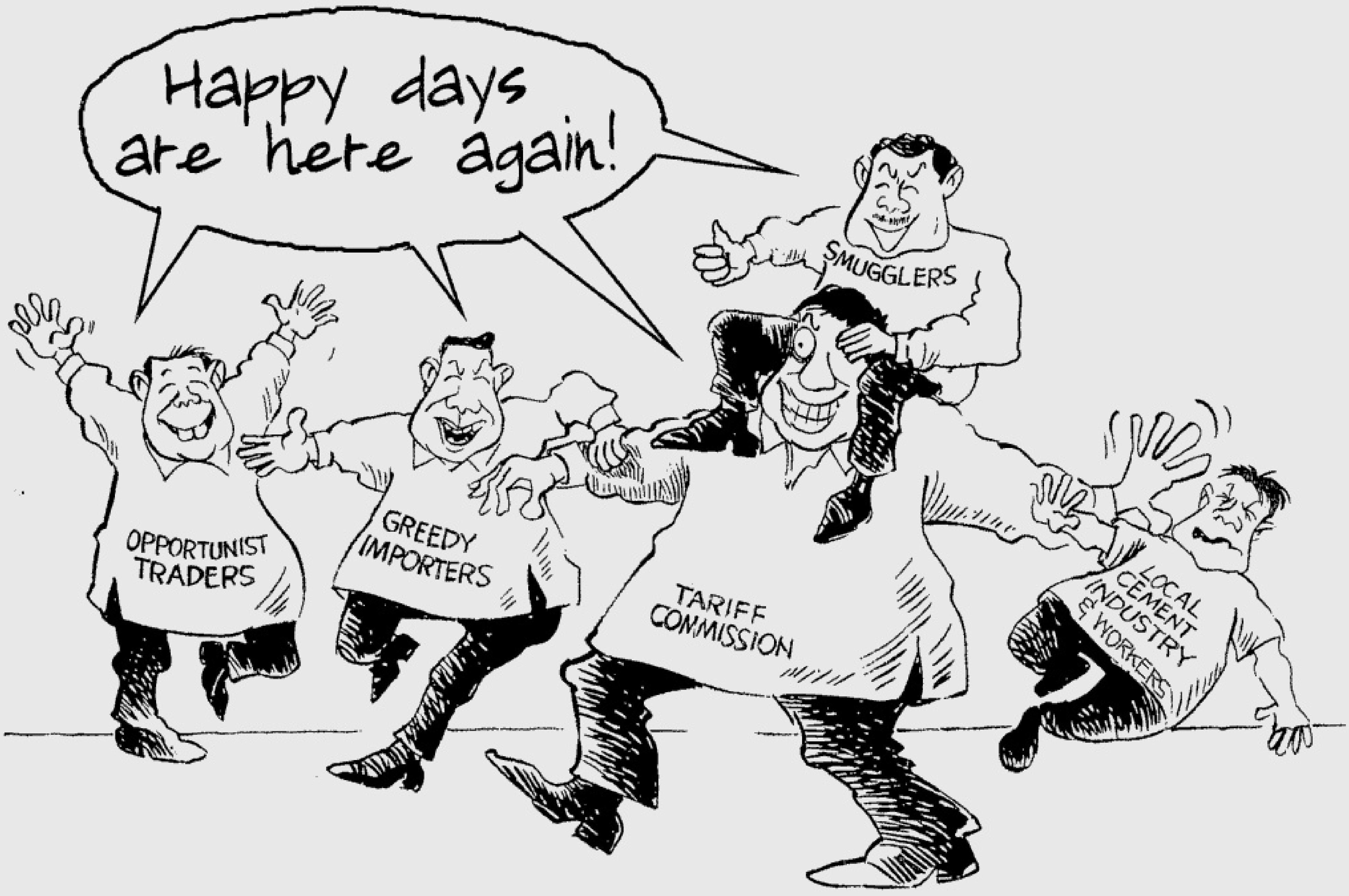
President: Ma. Felicidad A. Soto, MD
Vice President: Merci Antoinette S. Gappi, MD
Secretary: Patrick Gerard L. Moral, MD

Board of Directors/Incorporators
Ruth Marie R. Divinagracia, MD
Ruby DG. Manalastas, MD
Rosalina B. Espiritu, MD
Michael Alexius A. Sarte, MD

Members
Ma. Encarnita Blanco-Limpin, MD
Therese M. Leopando, MD
Imelda S. David, MD
Manuel C. Jorge, MD

The Enemy Within

Mandated to save and protect local industries, the Tariff Commission does exactly the opposite. Its ruling to scrap the protective tariff set up by the government will destroy the cement industry.



The Tariff Commission was established to act as a protector of Filipino businesses. For a long time, It proved to be a bastion of defense against the inroads of foreign manufacturers that have been dumping their products in the local market, and threatening the very foundation of Philippine industry.

Today, the Tariff Commission has completely destroyed its very reason for being.

We refer to its treasonous action to scrap the tariff wall that somehow protected local cement manufacturers since November 2001. By imposing a tariff of P20.60 per cement bag, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) had hoped to check the unbridled entry of foreign cement that were being sold here at artificially low or "dumping" prices into the country by a mafia of cement importers.

By junking the tariff imposed on the entry of cheap Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese and Indonesian cement into the country, the Tariff Commission has proven itself to be a snitch that would protect cement smugglers and local profiteers who have been dumping their imported products here.

The 30,000 cement industry workers and their dependents rejoiced in November 2001 when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the DTI slapped the tariffs on foreign cement. Today, they are wailing in anguish as the Tariff Commission acted as the protector of their sworn enemies, doing a Pontius Pilate at the expense of the suffering people.

By its singular act, the Tariff Commission has wittingly and actively participated in the organized destruction of the local cement industry that has been hobbled by the unmitigated entry of cheap foreign cement imported by a gang of traders some of whom employ less than 100 people. It has compromised the interest of a multibillion peso industry and tortured the workers of the remaining struggling cement companies.

Filipino workers will never forget the treason that the Tariff Commission has willingly committed to promote the interest of aliens and the compradors who have made billions in profits at the expense of the government itself and the future of this nation.

It is not only stupid but downright subversive for the Tariff Commission to argue that the reduction of the market share of local cement manufacturers to only 80 percent does not constitute a dangerous sign. Rather, the commission claimed that it is the consumers who are benefitted by the continuing onslaught of these foreign cement makers.

The Tariff Commission willingly sustained the arguments of profiteers by insisting that the unbridled influx of foreign cement disciplines the local manufacturers, it is nothing more than legitimizing dumping at the expense of local companies.

The Tariff Commission has become our own people's enemy.

Save our jobs. Save our lives. Save the Cement Industry

Alliance of Stakeholders of the Philippine Cement Industry

Gloria okays SEAG hosting

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has given the thumbs-up sign to host the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, instructing the Philippine Olympic Committee to start the ball rolling on the preparation for the Games which the country last hosted 11 years ago.

MACAPAGAL

POC president Celso Dayrit said the President's approval formalized the Philippines' hosting which was actually delayed by four years after the country allowed Brunei and Vietnam to take their turns in staging the biennial event.

Dayrit earlier said he was planning to pick the same people to compose the Manila Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee in 1991 to duplicate, if not surpass, the success of the Manila SEAG where the country finished second with 91 gold medals as against Indonesia's 92.

The next step, according to Dayrit, is the selection of the venue where at least five cities and provinces are vying for the prestige of staging the Games, including Manila, Bacolod-Iloilo, Socsargen, Cebu City and Pampanga.

The POC president also said a committee would be formed to study the hosting bids and make recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella earlier estimated the hosting to cost P2 million if the Games are held in Bacolod and Iloilo, which already have existing sports facilities.

Meanwhile, the POC will hold a crucial general assembly today, tackling vital issues concerning the country's preparation for the Asian Games in Busan in September.

Early last week POC secretary general Romy Ribaño said they are worried over the attendance in today's meeting considering that 15 NSA heads snubbed the gathering last January to show their displeasure over Dayrit's leadership.

But athletics chief Go Teng Kok, who is among the leaders of the anti-Dayrit camp, said they will show up in the meeting at the Café J in Makati because they don't want to "rock the boat" at this time when the country is gearing up for the Asiad.

"We will be there for the sake of the country's stint in the Asiad, we are aware of the importance of this general assembly especially in our preparations," said Go. "But that doesn't mean that we are finally coming to terms with Mr. Dayrit and his men. We just want to set aside our differences for the meantime."

Kasibulan 6-12 football to hold 350 tournaments

JOHNNY Romualdez, chair of Kasibulan 6-12, the Grassroots Development Program of the Philippine Football Federation, announced recently that for the year 2002, a record 350 Adidas Cups will be held all over the country.

ROMUALDEZ

Adidas Cups are one-to-two day football festivals held in large public schools in cities, towns and municipalities where Kasibulan "Teach The Teachers" seminars were held during the past three years. A minimum of 40 teams made up of six to twelve year-olds from different elementary schools in each area play four-a-side soccer in a fiesta-like atmosphere. In the past, participation of 100 teams or more at a time was common.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Romualdez noted that the Kasibulan 6-12 program over three years reached out to 20,380 teachers in almost 10,000 schools located all over the country through 458 Milo "Teach The Teachers" seminars. A total of 406 Adidas Cups have been held during the year 2000 and 2001, participated in by 20,000 teams and almost 150,000 elementary school students. The Philippine Football Federation reported that over P30 million has thus far been spent on its Grassroots Program through a FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) financial aid program and sponsorships by Adidas, Milo and the German government.

"This amount equates to about P200 spent for every new elementary school player generated," the ex-Ateneo, YCO and national team player said. "The next step is to help these kids continue playing by providing venue for play such as the Adidas Cups." Balls and bibs are provided by Adidas and organization and supervision are done by a Kasibulan instructor based in each of 50 provinces all over the Philippines, in coordination with DECS (Department of Education Culture & Sports) teachers and supervisors.

"This year, Romualdez continued, "the PFF budget for Kasibulan has been limited by Philippine participation in two under-17 and two under-20 international tournaments and one men's senior team participation." As a consequence, no additional expansion via Teach The Teachers seminars are expected. Instead, Milo has opted for clinics, which it hoped will enhance the skills of the older boys who have participated in Adidas Cups. A separate program for these is reportedly in the works in Milo.

When no commitments for participation in international tournaments are made in the future, more "Teach The Teachers" seminars are expected and consequently more Adidas Cups. Romualdez said that another project considered is the participation and sponsorship of cost-effective tournaments by local governments and DECS and the expansion into high school through a Kasibulan 13-17 program, "assuming Fifa aid continues."

Swimming festival April 6-7

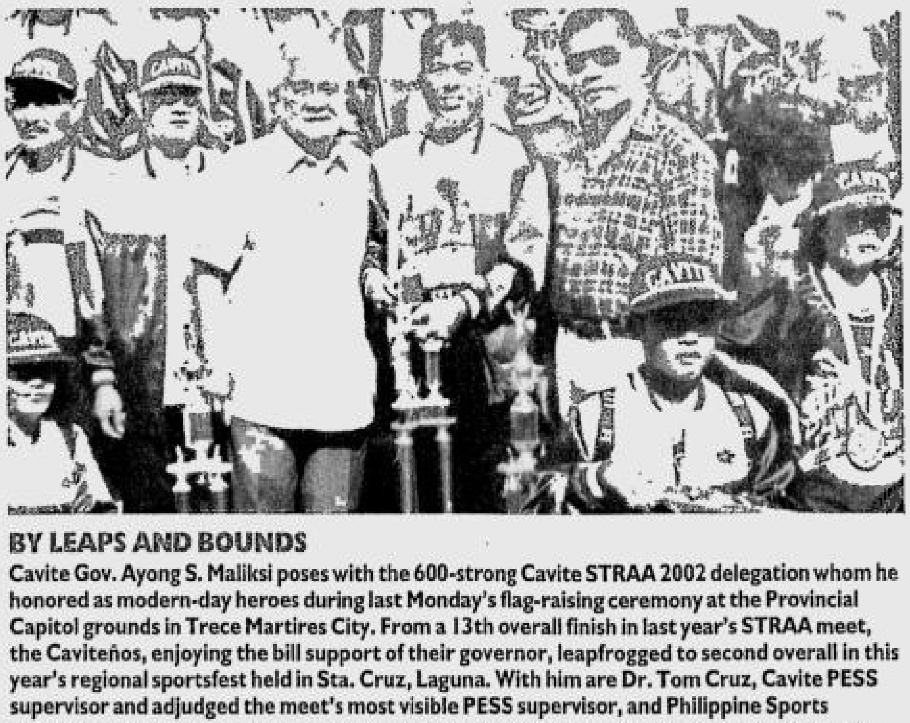
FOLLOWING the huge success of its inaugural event last year, a bigger and better Ceelin Swimming Festival has been set on April 6-7 at the St. Benedict College pool in Ayala-Alabang with more than young 600 swimmers expected to participate.

This was announced recently by Ceelin product manager Joey Peralta. "We believe that the 2nd Ceelin Swimming Festival addresses one major component of a general sports development program, that of establishing a bigger base of swimmers and encouraging kids to engage in sports at a young age. Our product, Ceelin vitamin C is perfectly aligned with sports as it provides kids with protection, resistance, and strength," he said.

Sanctioned by the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (Pasa) with former Olympic swimmer and Asian Games gold medalist Ral Rosario as organizer, the event for those who are 12 years and younger, should spur a renewal of interest in swimming among kids, according to Rosario.

The event is expected to attract entries from schools and swimming clubs not just in Metro Manila but even from nearby provinces as what happened last year when entries from as far as Pangasinan, Olongapo, Batangas, Camarines Sur, Laguna, and Cavite showed up for the one-day event.

Entry deadline is on March 30 and inquiries can be made at 8991897, fax number 8991933 and e-mail gar@pacific.net.ph.



BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Cavite Gov. Ayong S. Maliksi poses with the 600-strong Cavite STRAA 2002 delegation whom he honored as modern-day heroes during last Monday's flag-raising ceremony at the Provincial Capitol grounds in Trece Martires City. From a 13th overall finish in last year's STRAA meet, the Caviteños, enjoying the bill support of their governor, leapfrogged to second overall in this year's regional sportsfest held in Sta. Cruz, Laguna. With him are Dr. Tom Cruz, Cavite PESS supervisor and adjudged the meet's most visible PESS supervisor, and Philippine Sports Commission regional director Clarito Rint. The delegation was also chosen as best in parade, best in uniform, the most disciplined and the cleanest.

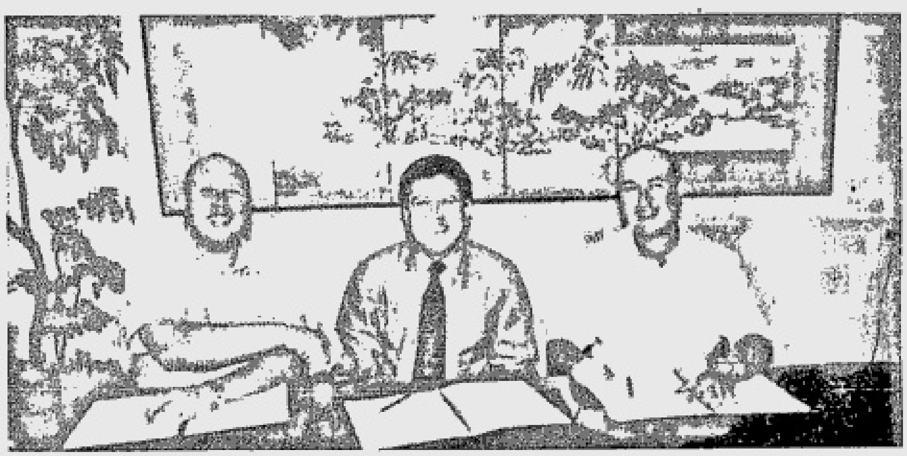
PBA ACTION

ROMY HOMILLADA

LEONARD White of Purefoods tries to score over Jojo Lim and Rob Wainwright of Shell during their game Tuesday. Purefoods won, 92-87.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1992, Richard Baluya beat Alexander Vinas in 62 moves of a Catalan opening to bag the March edition of the Metropolitan Chess Club tournament at the MCC on Taft Avenue. Also today in 1993, Toni Leviste cleared the obstacles in 33 minutes and 44 seconds to snatch the Puerto Azul Equestrian Cup in Cavite.



NEW MBA CARRIER

Metropolitan Basketball Association Commissioner Chito Loyzaga (left) signs an agreement with Silverstar Communications Inc. president Louie Kierulf (middle) that would make Silverstar as chief carrier of the MBA games over National Broadcasting Network (NBN-4). Cebuana Lhullier executive vice president and general manager Jean Henri Lhuillier (right) also signed a deal that makes Cebuana Lhuillier one of the MBA's major sponsors.

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RP team gets Olympic chance

AFTER a long absence from Olympic team action, the Philippines gets a chance to prepare and qualify one team for the 2004 Athens Games, thanks to the International Olympic Solidarity.

"While individual athletes have received Olympic Solidarity support in the past, this is the first time OS is going to help a team from selected NOCs gain possible participation in the Athens Olympics," said Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso L. Dayrit yesterday.

Since the 1972 Munich Olympic Games where the Philippines competed in basketball for being the Asian champion, no other RP squad has played in an Olympic team event.

But while the POC is among the selected NOCs that will be given priority for the OS team support, Dayrit clarified that the financial grant will be made available only if the POC-proposed team meet certain qualifications and pass Olympic Solidarity approval.

The grant to the POC may be used to defray training cost in the team's preparation for and/or participation in Olympic qualifying competitions. Should the team earn a slot in the Athens Olympics, it may receive additional grants to prepare for the 2004 Games.

Applications must include a summary of past results of the team in international competitions, specific list of athletes and coaches, proposed training camp, program, competitions and cost.

Dominator leads 7-cock qualifiers

NEWCOMER entry AT Alkalde Dominator of Naval, Biliran Mayor Gerry Boy Espina and BJ Greenwood I of UCAP president Butch Macasaet lead the qualifiers in today's "7th UCAP/Firebird MB Anito MB 7-Cock Derby" at the Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Espina and Macasaet's bets which posted three victories each in last Tuesday's elimination round participated in by 39 entries are heavily favored in today's 4-cock championship round. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo.

Meanwhile, the next derby at Mandaluyong Coliseum will be on April 2 and 4, dubbed as the "LCC 7-Cock Derby" with Louie Cua and Company as hosts.

For inquiries, contact 534-4110, 531-4003, 535-2341 and 531-4005.

NASH SIZZLES

Mavericks stop Kobe, Lakers

DALLAS—The Dallas Mavericks held Kobe Bryant to just 12 points on their way to an impressive 114-98 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday, halting LA's winning-streak at five.

All-Star Steve Nash scored 30 points for the Mavs, who have won seven of their last 10 games.

Dirk Nowitzki added 19 points with 11 rebounds and Michael Finley scored 22.

Bryant averages 26 points per game, and had a season-high 56 points earlier this year but the All-Star guard was limited to just 14-of-18 shooting.

Shaquille O'Neal led the Lakers with 32 points and 10 rebounds but received little support as Dallas went on a 13-2 run in the fourth to wrap up the victory.

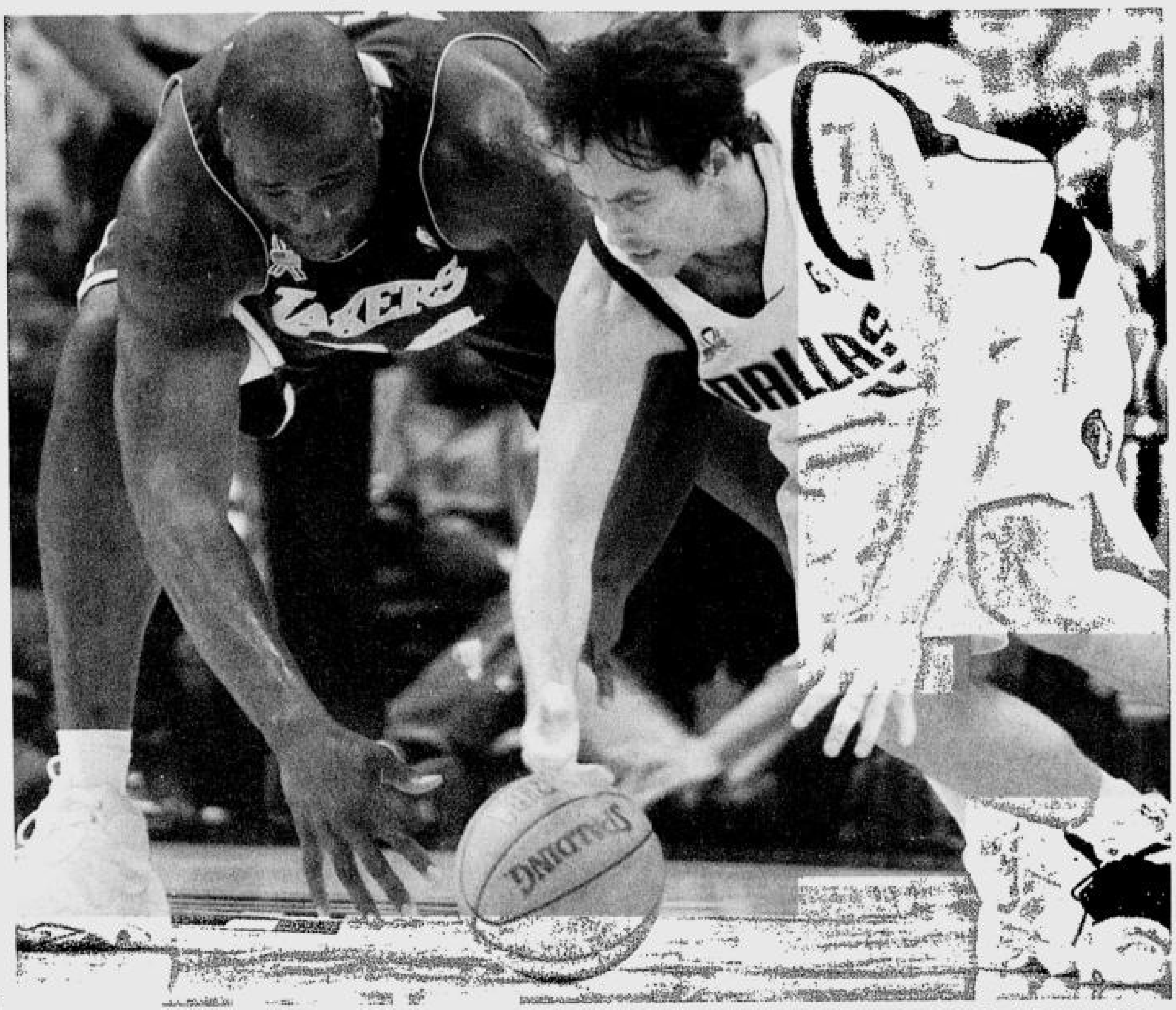
Kings 110, Rockets 87

In Houston, Chris Webber had 35 points, 12 rebounds and five assists as the Sacramento Kings downed the Rockets, 110-87.

The Kings (48-18) own the best record in the NBA this season and took back the top spot in the Western Conference from the Lakers.

Bobby Jackson scored 20 points and Mike Bibby added 15 as the Kings won for the sixth time in their last seven games. *Reuters*

Complete results—Cleveland 100, New Jersey 97; Philadelphia 91, Miami 79; New York 101, Memphis 92; Minnesota 112, Toronto 80; Orlando 101, Milwaukee 91; Atlanta 102, Chicago 96; Dallas 114, LA Lakers 98; Detroit 94, Utah 87; Seattle 110, Golden State 93; Sacramento 110, Houston 87. *Reuters*



LOS ANGELES Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal (left) battles Dallas Mavericks guard Steve Nash for ball possession in the first half of their NBA game yesterday in Dallas. Dallas won, 114-98. The Lakers will be seen on NBN 4 tonight when they battle the San Antonio Spurs starting at 10. Tonight's game also features an exciting matchup between the two best centers in the NBA, O'Neal (27.1 points and 10.9 rebounds/game), the NBA's Player of the Week for March 4-10, and San Antonio's Tim Duncan (25.1 points and 12.1 rebounds/game). AP

Bid to play with Woods starts at $.1M

NEW YORK—Tiger Woods will play a round of golf with your foursome for a price — with the bidding on eBay starting at $100,000, the online auctioneers said on Tuesday.

Worldwide bidding will be held from April 4-14 — dates that coincide with Woods' defense of his Masters Tournament title — in a sale originally slated for late September last year that was postponed due to the attacks of Sept. 11.

Woods will play 18 holes with the highest bidder and his three guests at the world No. 1-ranked player's home course, the Isleworth Country Club, near Orlando, Florida.

Proceeds will benefit the Tiger Woods Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports community-based programs that promote the health, education and welfare of children. *Reuters*

Holidays

COMMENTARY

by Vic Vic Villavicencio

SOARING temperatures last week left no doubt Summer 2002 is already on us. The long Holy Week holidays announced by the national leadership was, to many outdoor types, also welcome news.

Those planning to spend vacation days at some out-of-town resort better confirm their reservations now. It may not yet be too late. Check out the alternate destinations if the more popular ones are already fully booked.

Subic, meaning the SBMA complex, will definitely be on the list of many holiday planners. It is close to Metro Manila, only two to three hours drive. And it offers a variety of summer activities. One can go fishing, scuba diving, jet skiing, or visit the new facility that offers a dolphin show and a swim-with-the-whales program. Many beaches are open to the public, as is Grande Island. The best source of information on activities and available facilities is the Tourism Department of the SBMA.

We know of a more adventurous group now planning a 4-day camping/fishing expedition to one of the islets comprising the Ambil group near Lubang in Mindoro. Not a bad idea. They plan to take off from Nasugbu or Calatagan. These two towns, plus Lian, by the way, have enough resorts with varying rates for those who prefer to stay within the mainland.

For strictly family affairs that include introducing youngsters to the fishing sport, there's Island Cove and Boy Eusebio's bangus fish pens in Cavite. Or the fish ponds of Valenzuela, Bulacan.

Caliraya and Lumot lakes in Laguna are also close enough to Manila for those who do not want to venture too far. Lucena is also close by, and there is a fishing club there planning summer tournaments.

Farther north is Zambales. One can even plan to spend some of the summer days in the Hundred Islands area or in Bolinao.

For the serious big game angler, there is, of course, Santa Ana, Cagayan. Already considered the sailfish capital of the Philippines, this is what many sports fisherman are planning for. The Philippine Game Fishing Foundation maintains a center there, with outrigger bancas available. Others bring their own boats, mounted on trailers, all the way there from Manila.

This may sound like too much hassle. But it's really worth all the effort. Because aside from sailfish, there is tuna, dorado, wahoo, tanguingue and big jacks to give anglers moments to remember, stories to tell, and big ones to brag about.

The PGFF can be reached through tel. 373-0248 if you want more details and wish to make reservations.

RC races Saturday; 5 divisions slated

RC car racing takes the limelight anew with the staging of the 1st Connecticut Speedway Kyosho Mini-Z Cup this Saturday (March 23) starting 7 p.m. at the Connecticut Speedway Indoor track, Design Mix Center, 59 Connecticut St., Greenhills, San Juan.

RC enthusiasts with Kyosho Mini-Z and HPI Micro RS4 cars are qualified to join this bimonthly event sponsored by Fatboy Joe Racing, Skinny Z Racing, GPM Racing-HK, Team Petron Greenhills, Dragracingpinoy.com, Audiophile Components Inc. and Accord Savings Bank Inc-Cainta.

"We were very happy with the successful launching early this month that lured RC cars enthusiasts from Olongapo, Pampanga and Laguna. And as per public demand, we're going to stage more exciting and competitive races," said Connecticut Speedway organizer Sonny Yalung.

Participants will be vying for titles in the following divisions: Kyosho Mini-Z F1 Open, Kyosho Mini-Z High-Mount Open (Beetle and Vitz bodies only), Kyosho Mini-Z Rally Car Open, HPI Micro RS4 and BRP 1/18 class open.

There will be four heats per category and five minutes per heat. But only three heats will count per participant.

Deadline for registration will be until 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

For further details, please contact Yalung at 0917-4771604 or visit the website at www.connecticutspeedway.com or e-mail your registration at info@connecticutspeedway.com.

Schumi's gargantuan salary; Harp hearsay?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I misquoted Ferrari's Michael "Schumi" Schumacher in an article that appeared here yesterday. The defending Formula 1 champion did not say "He deserves the penalty" referring to Juan Pablo Montoya's penalty on Sunday during the Malaysian Grand Prix.

The 26-year-old Montoya, on board a BMW Williams, was slapped a drive-thru penalty to the pit lane after stewards found him guilty of clipping the nose of Schumacher's red Ferrari at the first corner of the Sepang Circuit seconds after blast-off.

Montoya, who finished second behind Schumi's brother Ralf, slammed the penalty that forced him to drive at a slow 80kph at the pit lane. It deprived him of maintaining his clip of more than 200kph, a daredevil speed that could have given all the elbow room to defeat his teammate—Ralf Schumacher, 26. Truth was, Montoya registered the fastest lap time in Sepang—nearly 230kph.

"It was unfair of them to penalize me," said Montoya, the brash Colombian whose runnerup finish gave him 12 points after two legs and put him just two points behind the series-leading Schumi. "I actually gave Schumacher room but he understeered a bit and touched me and that was it."

Schumi, 32, actually echoed Montoya's sentiments. He said Montoya's penalty was uncalled for.

Deadline pressure and all, still my fault. Sorry for the slip.

■

Speaking of Formula 1, do you know that it is the world's No. 1 spectator sport, attracting more TV viewers worldwide than the World Cup of soccer? Also, it is the most expensive sport ever, with giant car makers like Toyota having the rare courage to join Formula 1 action.

Michael Schumacher, the German speedster seeking to win a record-equaling fifth world crown, earns no less than US$30 million a year. It is widely believed that only Tiger Woods beats that figure.

Schumacher's Benetton-sponsored car that won the 1994 Formula 1 has fetched more than US$1 million in an auction held last week in Europe.

Schumi's Ferrari is bankrolled this year by global name brands to the tune of nearly US$200 million and BMW Williams nearly US$170 million.

Who can top those?

■

Spirit of '67, the band the Sixties generation has learned to love, will not be at Shangri-La's Conways Bar today. Reason: The band will perform in Hong Kong tonight in a party to be hosted by a millionaire-banker. The band's fee is a whopping US$7,500. Free air fare, hotel accommodation and other expenses.

"They've gone international," said Andy Dumlao, my golf buddy who helped pave the way for the band's first performance abroad. "And to think that they started out their act as a mere gig some 10 years ago by way of reminiscing their college days at Ateneo."

Sonny Alvendia, the group's manager, must be in Cloud 9 right this minute.

■

Devonn Harp could be the victim of a frame-up. A woman in her late 20s has charged him with rape. The rape was reportedly committed twice. They happened days apart. The second rape reportedly occurred when the woman went back to the house of Harp.

Something fishy here, I guess.

The talented Fil-Am is almost a cinch to make it to the national team bound for the Busan Asian Games in September.

What do you think?

■

Public Service: Splash Island, a favorite haunt of fun-seeking family outdoor-persons located just beside the Manila Southwoods golf course, is close on Good Friday. It will reopen on Black Saturday. For inquiries, call 928-0507.

Jordan back in practice with Washington

JORDAN: "Everything has been very positive."

WASHINGTON— Washington Wizards owner-superstar Michael Jordan had his first practice on Tuesday since arthroscopic surgery on his knee.

Jordan had an easy one-hour practice to test the stability of his injured right knee. Jordan underwent surgery on Feb. 27 to repair torn cartilage.

"Everything has been very positive," Jordan told the Washington Post. "Ever since I've done it I feel very confident that a lot of issues I was dealing with have pretty much subsided.

"To some degree, along with that, the tendinitis in my left knee has kind of subsided. "The rest has been very helpful. It's just a matter of getting myself in shape enough to comeback and play."

This is the second time that the five-time NBA Finals MVP has been placed on the injured list.

Jordan said he does not expect to play in the Wizards game against Denver on Wednesday or Utah on Thursday and hinted that his first appearance back on the court would be in Toronto against the Raptors.

"But if I'm limping around out there, then it's not going to do us any good," Jordan said.

The Wizards have been 4-8 without Jordan in the lineup. They are battling with Charlotte for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Last season Washington, without Jordan, could not have imagined being playoff contenders and stumbled to a 19-win season. *Reuters*

Capuno scrabble champ

CIVIL engineer Leonardo U. Capuno nosed out co-leaders Rolly C. Mandapat and Bonnie R. Macapala via the tiebreak to rule the Word Power Scrabble Tournament held at the Greenhills Chess Plaza recently.

Capuno, who won six of seven games, grabbed the champion's trophy plus P5,000. Mandapat settled for the second placer trophy plus P3,000, while Macala of Sampaloc, Manila took the third-place trophy plus P1,000.

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office bankrolled the tournament organized by Sports Activities Inc. in coordination with the Scrabble Association of the Philippines Inc.

Calamba Rural Bank general manager Robbie Onate wound up in fourth place to earn P1,000. Rudy Chavez wound up fifth in the tournament which drew 56 players.

Mabuhay Educational Center gave out P500 each to players in the sixth to 14th places.

2nd ID shooters sparkle

THE 2nd Infantry Division based in Tanay, Rizal won the recent 12th CGPA Cup held at Fort Ramon Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija,

Members of the 2ID shooters, who bested the fancied Light Armor Brigade team, were 2nd Lt. Jerold Jale. Cpl. Arthur Tirador, Pfc. Angelito Astoveza, SSgt. Nicasion Hugo and Cpl. Nuel Guna.

The 2ID shooters scored 46 team index points in the rifle match and tallied index points in the pistol match of the competition which is part of the Army's celebration of its 105th anniversary tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the contingents of the Headquarters and Headquarters Support Group (HHSG) won the team competition for both the military and civilian category in the Philippine Army's 3rd Physical Fitness Challenge at the HPA Grandstand, Fort Bonifacio, Makati last March 16.

RACING TIPS

At Sta. Ana

By Mr. 999

Race 1—1. Rugged Dancer 2. Come N Go 3. Best Lover 4. Ariana's Pride

Race 2—1. Terrific 2. Conquer D Sun 3. Red Bells 4. Silent Wind

Race 3—1. Maayo Kaayo 2. Foreign Exchange 3. High and Mighty

Race 4—1. Arriba King 2. Bumper to Bumper 3. En Carta 4. Irish Star 5. Play By Ear

Race 5—1. Earth Angel 2. Bardgaul 3. Roulette Queen 4. Wishing Well

Race 6—1. Rock's Dragon 2. Charisse Angel 3. The Painter 4. My Prayer

Race 7—1. Gidget 2. Noble Principality 3. Guts Pleaser 4. Court General 5. Fortius

Race 8—1. Sense of Justice 2. Jackpot 3. Scholar's Best 4. Shuttle's Rianne

Race 9—1. Zip On 2. Ocean Friend 3. Carlo's Charm 4. Flashy Girl 5. Touch of Luck 6. Thunder Speed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Michigan ready to host Tyson-Lewis fight

DETROIT—Michigan has renewed Mike Tyson's boxing license, clearing the way for a proposed Detroit-area bout with heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

Matt Resch, spokesman for Gov. John Engler, said the governor's office was informed Tuesday by the Department of Consumer and Industry Services that Tyson's license had been renewed through August 2002.

Michigan can deny a license only if a boxer is on suspension in any other state, in jail or fails a pre-fight physical.

Detroit is competing against several sites for a Tyson-Lewis fight. Tyson also has been licensed in Tennessee, and officials for both Tyson and Lewis said Tuesday that Memphis was emerging as a strong candidate.

Tyson adviser Shelly Finkel said meetings with arena officials, local politicians and casino executives convinced him the fight could be held in Tennessee.

But Finkel said Washington is still in the running, and that Detroit has an outside chance of landing the fight. He said the site would be announced by the end of the week. *AP*

BATAAN BOXING

Gov. Ding Roman of Bataan (second from left) shows the championship belt he is donating to the winner of the fight between reigning Philippine superbantamweight champion Dino Olivetti (third from left) and No. 1 contender Roberto Oyan on April 6 at the People's Coliseum in Balanga, Bataan. At extreme left is Alex Yabut while noted international matchmaker Jun Sarreal is at extreme right. Proceeds of the fight are earmarked for charity projects.

Golez main guest of Elorde awards

NATIONAL Security Adviser J. Roilo Golez, a former amateur boxing champion and former president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, has accepted the invitation to be the guest of honor and speaker during the second Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Annual Awards–Banquet of Champions set March 25 at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila.

Golez was an amateur boxing champion during his stint with the US Navy in Acropolis. He became Abap president right after the martial law years from 1986 to 1987 and later embarked on a political career.

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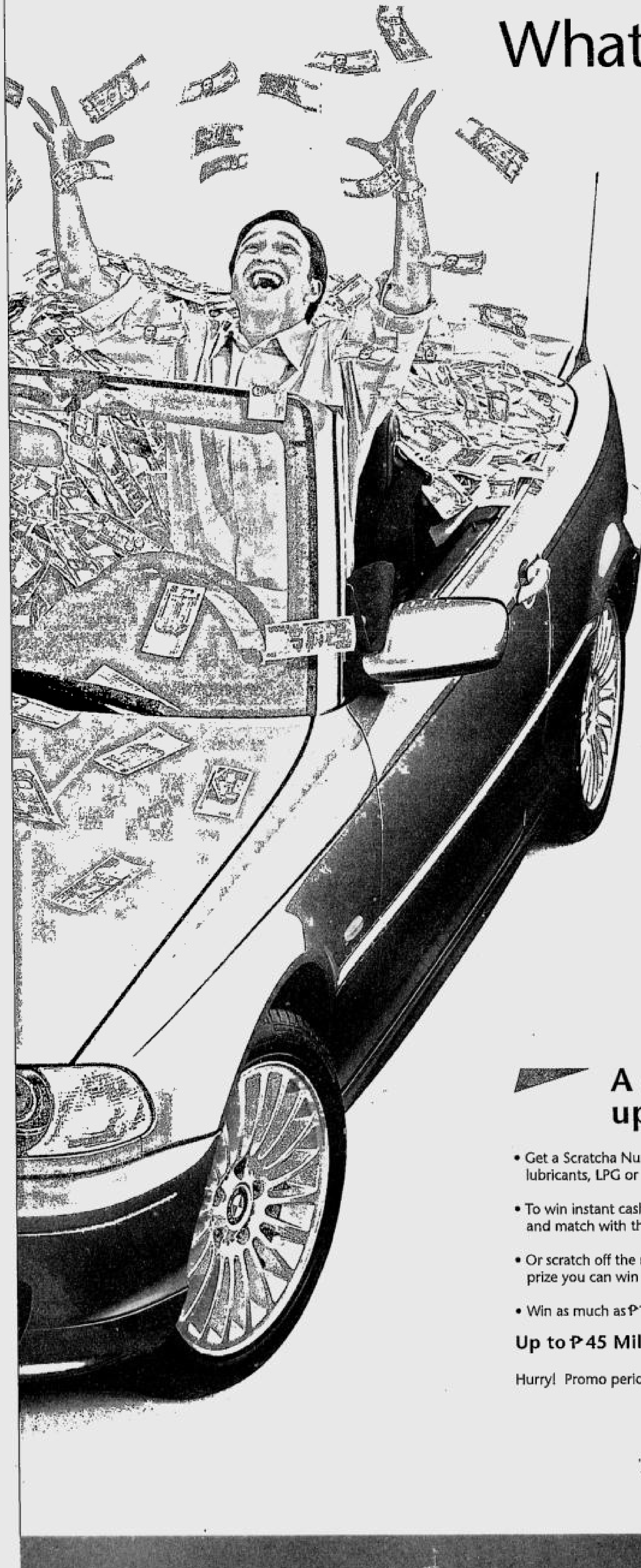

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SCRATCHA NUMBA

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0245 Series of 2002.

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PROMO MECHANICS

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a. Scratch off the 3 boxes on the scratch card to reveal the 3-digit number combination. Each digit is printed in words at the bottom.
b. Match the 3-digit no. combination with the winning *Caltex Scratcha Numba* combination announced every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between March 18 & June 7, 2002 in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star and posted in all participating Caltex stations. The March 29 (Good Friday) announcement will be moved to March 31 (Easter Sunday). Announcements in local dailies will be made every Saturday within the same period, except on March 30 (Black Saturday).*
c. If the number combination on your game card matches any of the announced winning number combinations in exactly the same order (Ex. 018 does not match 081), you win exactly the cash equivalent of the 3-digit number printed on the card. (Ex. If your number combination is 999 you win ₱999 or if your number combination is 020 you win ₱20)
d. Cash prizes can be claimed at participating Caltex stations from Monday to Friday, from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, upon surrender of the winning game card.
e. Game cards are subject to validation by the authorized Caltex station representative. Only winning cards with authenticated security code will be honored. Crumpled, defaced and torn game cards or those with scratched security code ("void if scratched" box) will be disqualified.
f. Cash prizes must be claimed within 60 days from the end of the promo period. All unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of Caltex (Philippines) Inc., with prior approval of DTI.
g. Employees of Caltex (Philippines) Inc., participating Caltex stations, McCann-Erickson (Phils.), Inc., Caltex promotions agencies, suppliers, and all their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the instant promo.

Raffle Draw:

a. Scratch off the raffle box on the scratch card to reveal the cash prize you can win in the raffle. The amount printed on it should be any of the ff: *₱1 million, ₱5 million* or *₱10 million* only.
b. Indicate/write your name, address, tel. no. and/or cell. no. on the raffle stub and sign it. Then drop it in drop boxes located at any of the participating Caltex stations.
c. There will be one (1) raffle draw with (3) winners. If your raffle entry is drawn, you can win exactly the same amount indicated on your drawn winning raffle entry. You can win as much as ₱10 million only.
d. A customer can win only once in the raffle draw. If a name is drawn more than once, the customer shall get the bigger prize.
e. Last day of submission of raffle entries is on June 15, 2002 at 12:00 pm. The Raffle draw will be held on June 30, 2002. The venue and time shall be submitted to DTI and announced two (2) weeks before the draw.
f. All winners will be notified through registered mail.
g. Raffle prizes can be claimed upon presentation of two (2) proper identifications (e.g., driver's license, passport, etc.) and the notification letter.
h. Raffle prizes can be claimed at 7/F 6750 Ayala Ave., 1226 Makati City, Philippines from Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm only.
i. Raffle prizes must be claimed within 60 days upon notification. All unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of Caltex (Philippines) Inc., with prior approval of DTI.
j. The 20% withholding tax on prizes worth ₱1,000,000.00 will be paid for by Caltex (Philippines) Inc. For prizes exceeding ₱1,000,000.00, the winner shall shoulder the 20% withholding tax.
k. Employees of Caltex (Philippines) Inc., participating Caltex stations, McCann-Erickson (Phils.), Inc., Caltex promotions agencies, suppliers and all their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the raffle promo.

3. Promo period is from March 15, 2002 to June 15, 2002.

*Approved by DTI-NCR.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No.0245 Series of 2002.

GMA okays hosting of SEA Games /A21
Tyson- Lewis fight in Michigan? /A23

SPORTS
Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS ON TV
Compiled by Lorenzo Mangulat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - 2002 Postseason NIT Tournament at 1 p.m. on ESPN

NBA – LA Lakers vs San Antonio Spurs at 10 p.m. on NBN 4

GOLF: PGA Bay Hill Invitational, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r), Highlights at 11:30 p.m. on Star Sports

HOCKEY: NHL - Phoenix Coyotes vs Pittsburgh Penguins at 9 a.m. (r – midnight) on ESPN

Hapee-RP faces slumping Alaska 5

TEAMS	W	L	TEAMS	W	L
Purefoods	6	1	Fedex	3	4
Red Bull	5	1	Sta. Lucia	2	4
Talk N Text	4	1	San Miguel	2	4
Coca-Cola	5	2	Selecta-RP	2	5
Hapee-RP	4	2	Ginebra	1	5
Alaska	3	3	Shell	.1	6

GAME TODAY (Makati Coliseum)
6 p.m.—Hapee-RP vs Alaska

By June Navarro

UICHICO

HAPEE-RP tries to extend its winning run when it battles slumping Alaska Aces in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup starting at 6 tonight at the Makati Coliseum.

The Nationals have won three of their last four matches to keep pace within range of the leaders at 4-2.

Coach Jong Uichico has molded Hapee-RP from a second fiddle national squad into a more dependable crew.

"My boys have the talent. But talent alone won't get you anywhere. Talent should combine with hard work and dedication and Hapee-RP possesses them," said Uichico.

On the other hand, the Aces will try to bounce back from their back-to-back setbacks after an impressive start.

Those twin beatings inflicted by Federal Express (83-69) and Coca-Cola (79-53) installed the Aces in the middle of the pack at 3-3.

Ron Riley has been doing his usual routine but Muntrelle Dobbins was almost a non-factor for the Aces in the past two games.

Should Dobbins again act way below his billing, expect Hapee-RP's Davonn Harp, Mick Pennisi, Rudy Hatfield, Jeffrey Cariaso, Boyet Fernandez and Danny Ildefonso to make a killing.

These guys did it against Coca-Cola, 87-77, and Shell, 82-69, apart from edging Selecta, 65-54, in the past three weeks.

Only Batang Red Bull managed to beat Hapee-RP during that time, a 90-82 overtime debacle against the Thunder on March 9.

Cage tryouts fire off today

BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines president Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal yesterday announced that the BAP will hold tryouts to boost the composition of the national youth team.

The tryouts are set for today and Friday at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum at 8 p.m.

"We are currently trying to form the pool for our national youth team. This is a very perfect opportunity for all our young players not only to hone their skills further, but to play for flag and country as well," said Literal.

The tryouts will be conducted by multititled coach Johny Tam, who will be assisted by former RP Youth standout Ching-Ching Marcelino and Rene Baena.

Players born in 1984 and above are welcome to join the two-day tryouts, which aim to select the players who will comprise the BA's youth training pool, where the final 12 players for the national team will come from.

Tablenet tilt on April 15-21

THE TABLE Tennis Association of the Philippines will host the TATAP National Table Tennis Selection on April 15-21 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The event aims to select the top five athletes in four categories to compose the national team seeing action in the Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam next year.

The tournament will have four categories—men's singles, women's singles, boys' singles 15-and-under and girls' singles 15-and-under.

The equipment, uniforms, and all technical aspects of organization will be patterned after international table tennis competition standards.

Application forms may be sent by registered mail to Rm. 203 Administration Building, Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, P. Ocampo St., Malate, Manila or fax to 404-1470. For more information, call Tatap Office at 522-1885.

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METRO

Editor Louie C. Camino

MIRANDA

His kidneys have ceased working /A26

Two more bombs

By Agnes Donato, Nelson Flores, TJ Burgonio, Martin Marfil and Rocky Nazareno

POLICE forces in Metro Manila went on full alert yesterday following the discovery of two more improvised bombs at the Metro Rail Transit stations in Kamuning, Quezon City and Ortigas, Mandaluyong City.

Authorities successfully defused both explosive devices, which they said were the handiwork of the same group that planted the bombs in Makati City discovered Monday night.

Police units were deployed to secure MRT and Light Rail Transit stations, malls and other vital installations and government offices in the metropolis.

Director Edgar Aglipay, head of the National Capital Region Police Office, sought to allay fears that a new round of bombings threatened Metro Manila. He said the bombs were not meant to explode, but could be part of a shadowy group's strategy to call attention to itself.

"They would just like to make a statement, but having the capability to do that, they could make these explode if they want to," Aglipay said.

The group, which called itself the Indigenous People's Federal Army (IPFA), enclosed leaflets in the packages containing the bombs. The IPFA wants government to divide the Philippines into three federal states—for indigenous people, Muslims and Christians.

In a report, Aglipay also linked the bombs to at least three other explosive devices found in Cotabato City last week.

Aglipay said the IPFA might not necessarily be a newly formed group.

He explained that it could be an old group trying to destabilize the Macapagal government by sowing terror in the metropolis.

TWO/ A26

Fire kills teenager, hurts 6

A 17-YEAR-OLD boy was killed and six other persons, including an 8-year-old boy, were injured during an hour-long fire in Sta. Mesa, Manila before dawn yesterday. Randy Bongales suffocated to death after the blaze engulfed a three-story apartment at the corner of Corregidor and First Streets in Bacood. Arson investigator FO3 Oscar Ropero of the Manila Fire Department identified the injured as RJ Bongales,8; Violanda Rio, 50; Juanito Dela Cruz, 45; Monica Tolda, 35; Noel Bongales, 45; Ryan Bongales, 19. Initial estimate put the damage at P2 million.

Philip Tubeza

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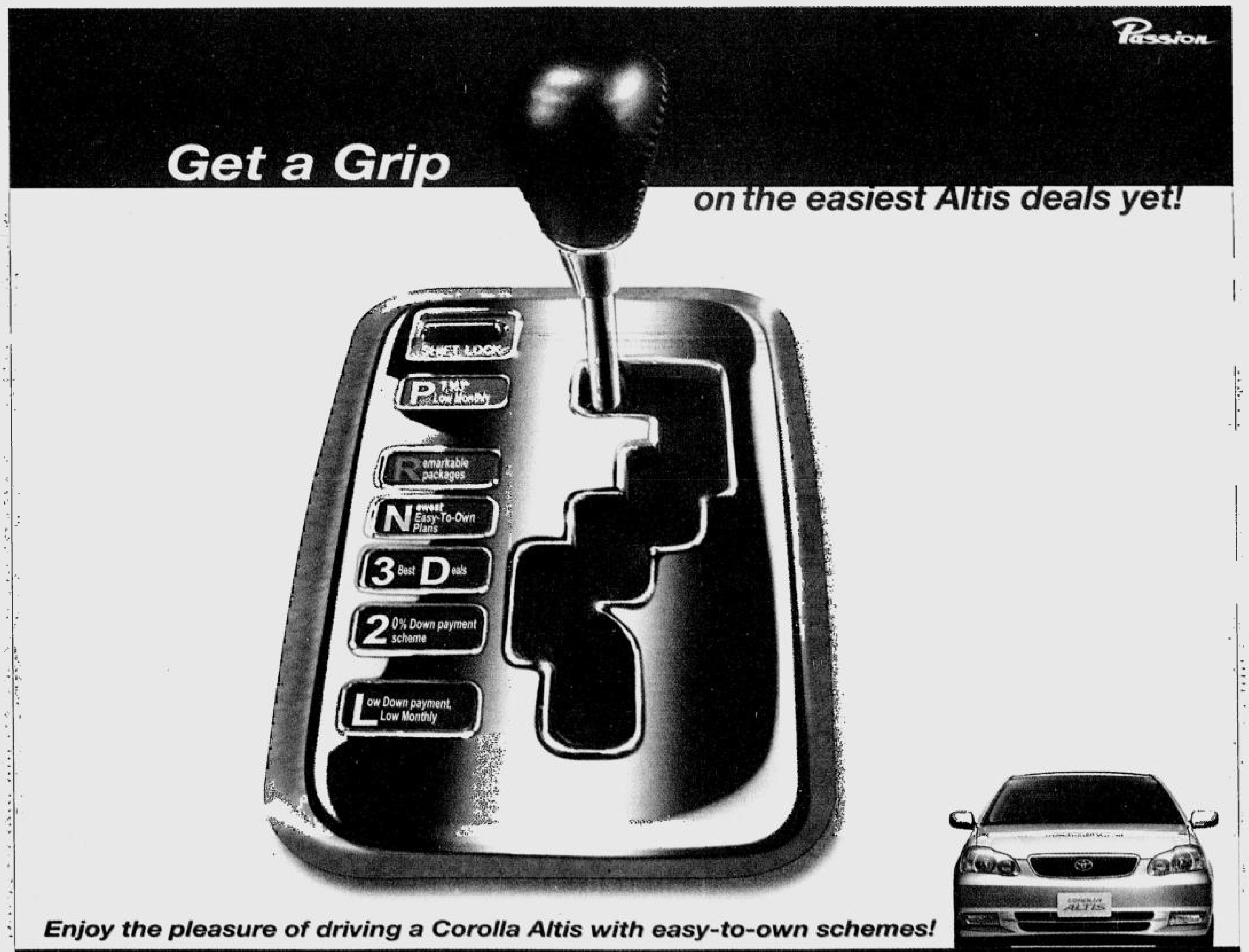

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Asian Spirit
THE PEOPLE'S AIRLINE

Sacked jail warden could've been bribed

By philip c. tubeza

A TELEVISION set, VCD player, and several video CDs strewn on the floor were the tell-tale signs that escaped Chinese nationals Rong-Rong Chua and Lim Tuy Tim, jailed for separate drug charges, could have been getting special treatment in jail.

Investigators are also looking into the possibility that the two inmates had bribed some jail officers to help them escape last Tuesday from their cell at the Manila City Jail, said Supt. Norvel Mingoa.

Mingoa replaced sacked Manila Jail warden Supt. Romeo Ogoy, who is now under investigation by the Bureau of Jail management and Penology. Mingoa said he had ordered a manhunt for the two fugitives.

His superiors were said to have given Mingoa two days to come up with concrete results on their investigation.

Chua and Lim escaped by cutting the iron bars of their cell with a saw and used a ladder to climb down the 14-foot prison wall to Avenida Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila, investigation showed.

One of the investigators noted that "the ladder was placed in such a way that the inmates could get away without being (caught) by the searchlight."

The ladder was supposedly used to clean the prison wall, and was left near the cell of the escaped inmates.

Chua was jailed on June 21 last year for alleged drug trafficking and Lim on Sept. 16, 1998, also for alleged drug trafficking.

His kidneys have ceased working

By philip c. tubeza

MIRANDA JR.

HIS parents first thought evil spirits were possessing him.

This happened one morning last month after 17-year-old Ernesto Miranda Jr. screamed for help.

When they woke up, Ernesto's parents saw the boy convulsing violently. The muscles in his face twitched and hardened while his eyes kept rolling up.

There was no evil spirit. The foul, frightening scene was being caused by Ernesto's kidneys, both of which were no longer working.

"He gets an infection whenever he does not undergo dialysis. When he gets infected, the convulsions happen," said Mang Ernesto, the patient's father.

And since his disease was diagnosed last December, Ernesto has had several attacks.

His doctor at PGH said that he has End-Stage Renal Disease secondary to Chronic Glomerulonephritis.

"Ideally, a kidney transplant should be done, but because the procedure would entail a large sum of money, Ernesto will have to undergo Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) until transplantation can be undertaken," explained doctor Francisco E. Anacleto Jr.

The dialysis costs P450 a day, which means he needs P13,500 every month. But that's not all. Ernesto's medications cost P6,491 a month.

This is beside the kidney transplant that the patient should eventually have. Two relatives have come forward and volunteered one of their kidneys but the Mirandas can't afford the operation, which was estimated to cost around half a million pesos.

Mang Ernesto works at a printing factory in Mandaluyong and, these days, he no longer gets his salary because they have all been used up to pay for loans.

Ernesto's mother, Aling Amelia, 44, is busy going to government charity agencies. The patient's sister, Mary Ann, 21, had just graduated and works for a rural bank in Morong, Rizal. Her meager earnings are not even enough to keep their family afloat.

Mang Ernesto begged Inquirer readers yesterday for help.

"I try to talk to my son after each convulsion to find out if he still recognizes me. The doctors said they fear the infection might reach his brain soon," he said.

The poor, helpless teenager needs a helping hand. Please contact Celine Madamba, Inquirer Corporate Relations Officer, at the PDI main office on Pasong Tamo, Makati City.

3 anti-narcs agents taking drugs

THREE anti-narcotics agents have been sacked for coddling suspected drug dealers and for taking illegal drugs.

Director Efren Fernandez, chief of the Narcotics Group (NarcGroup), has ordered the dismissal of police officer 3 Alberto Eusebio and PO1 Fernando Landicho after they were caught in the company of suspected drug couriers.

Eusebio and Landicho, both assigned at the Regional Narcotics Office in Region 3, were nabbed during a police raid on the home of Romeo and Leonor Benavidez in Olongapo City on Aug. 24 last year.

The Benavidez couple were also arrested.

Fernandez also dismissed PO1 Lirio Gorre, of the Regional Narcotics Office in Region 11, after he tested positive for shabu use following a random drug test conducted by the police crime laboratory.

"This is part of our continuing effort of cleansing our ranks of misfits. Again I will not tolerate my men caught engaging in illegal drug activities," he said in a statement. ***TJ Burgonio***

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DENR closes three dumpsites

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources has ordered the closure of three open dumpsites in Cavite and Rizal.

The DENR issued Notices of Violations (NOV) to Mayors Raymundo del Rosario of Tanza, Efren Nazareno of Naic, Cavite and Gerardo Calderon of Angono, Rizal after several teams sent by the National Waste Solid Management Commission (NWSMC) confirmed the operation of open dumpsites in the areas.

Residents of Barangay Sahud Ulan, Tanza and Barangay Sabang, Naic complained about toxic fumes emanating from the open dumps.

"Immediate rehabilitation and clean-up operations must be undertaken," Secretary Heherson Alvarez said in a statement.

He cited possible violations of Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Alvarez also asked the three mayors to explain in writing within seven days why their respective offices "should not be penalized with P500,000.00 for having committed an act which violates the law." ***Christine Gaylican***

UP Tau Gamma Phi reunion

THE UP Tau Gamma Phi Alumni Inc. will hold its organizational meeting and fellowship on Saturday from 3-10 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club Main Dining Room, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

Board of Trustees chair Rod Confessor enjoins the Triskelion Alumni of the UP Systems to attend the affair and help take up proposed projects, activities, and other business matters. Brods are requested to confirm their attendance thru the Secretariat c/o Manny Andal tel. nos. 8172036 and 8172078 or andalrealty@vasia.com.

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ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

WHAT'S wrong with the United States bringing additional troops to Basilan who will not be engaged in combat but in civic work?

Civic work—such as giving medical care to civilians, building farm-to-market roads, or reconstructing homes destroyed by the fighting—will go a long way toward winning the hearts and minds of the poor Basilan folk.

Right now, most people in remote areas in that war-torn province trust the Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front more than they trust the government. Why? Because they don't feel the government, Why? Because they don't feel the government presence in their backward communities.

***

Winning the sympathy of the poor barrio folk in Basilan's boondocks is more important than beating the Abu Sayyaf terrorists in combat.

Experts in guerilla warfare advocate more civic action work among the barrio folk rather than a search-and-destroy operation against the enemy.

Rebels thrive in areas where people are disenchanted with the government. Civilians in rebel-influenced areas give food and shelter to the enemy. Remove their food and shelter and the rebels will wither on the vine.

***

The Macapagal administration would do well to immediately grant the US request to send in troops who will do civic duties in Basilan's remote areas.

The American non-combatants will even be more useful to the government than the US advisers to Filipino troops. These non-combat personnel will do the job of Filipino government social workers that can't set foot in rebel-held territories because they would be harassed.

The US non-combatant troops can penetrate every nook and cranny of Basilan, one of the most underdeveloped provinces in the country, without fear of harassment from the rebels. They will enjoy ample protection from US and Filipino combat troops.

***

My advice to the beleaguered four female journalists in Cebu City is for them not to blink in their confrontation with an onion-skinned judge.

Stand your ground, ladies, against Regional Trial Court Judge Fortunato de Gracia!

With his judicial power, De Gracia now has the upper hand. But in the end, you will win. The underdog who fights on for a right cause always wins.

***

I should know, I once got embroiled in controversies with two judges in 1988: Esther Bans of the Olongapo City Regional Trial Court and Jose Bartolome of Tarlac.

The two honorable judges (kuno) sent this writer to prison, one after the other, for my alleged contemptuous behavior toward them. My fault was to expose their abusive use of judicial power—Bans, for thinking that I was referring to her when I exposed an unnamed corrupt judge in Olongapo City at the time; and Bartolome, for allowing three accused in a robbery-with-homicide case to roam free when they should be in jail.

Bans sentenced me to 10 days at the Olongapo City Jail, but changed her mind and ordered me released after three hours.

Bartolome made me spend five days out of the 10-day jail term he meted out to me, at the Bataan Provincial Jail in Balanga. The Court of Appeals ordered my release on the fifth day.

I got more public sympathy than I had imagined. As a result, Bans was forced to retire from the bench early, while Bartolome was eventually dismissed by the Supreme Court in connection with what a I had written about him.

***

The three female journalists are Thea Rinen, Cebu Daily News (CDN) editor in chief; Piedad Gonzalez, CDN news editor; and Suzanne Salva, CDN reporter.

The judge is accusing the three journalists of indirect contempt for allegedly maligning the magistrate in a front-page article in their newspaper. A story in the newspaper raised questions on whether De Gracia received a bribe in exchange for handling a favorable decision to an accused in an illegal drug case.

If the judge had a clear conscience, why should he get hurt by the article? *Sobra ang amor propio mo*, Judge!

***

The presidential spokesperson and nominee for press secretary, Rigoberto "Bobi" Tiglao, says he believes that Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson will not inject politics and personal grudge into the deliberation on his confirmation before the Commission on Appointments. Lacson is a new member of the CA.

Bobi, you are so naïve to think that the good senator will not harass you at the Commission! You really don't know the guy.

Lacson will use his position to get back at you for picking a quarrel with him.

***

One of the first things the boyish-looking Lacson did after he took over as chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP) was to sack Chief Supt. Jose Lalisan as director of Police Regional Office 4 based in Canlubang, Laguna.

Lalisan was only a few months in that position and he was doing a splendid job.

But why did Lacson, his mistah (classmate) at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), unceremoniously kick out Lalisan?

Because Lalisan accidentally shot Lacson while he was playing with a newly issued gun when they were still fresh PMA graduates.

***

You know what, Bobi?

In the very unlikely event that Lacson gets elected President of the republic, Roberto "Bobby" Lastimoso, Victor Corpus, Reynaldo Berroya and I will seek asylum in the United States. Lacson would have us all killed if he had the chance.

Tingnan mo lang yung nangyari kay Bubby Dacer.

ANG PAGDATING NI ELIAS AT IBA PANG PILING MGA KUWENTO
PAGTATAG

27 STORIES

THE POLYTECHNIC University of the Philippines launched recently Ave Perez Jacob's collection of 27 short stories, Ang Pagdating ni Elias at Iba Pang Piling Mga Kuwento, at the PUP Amphitheater. The affair had as main speaker PUP President Ofelia M.Carague (not in picture). Shown seated are Prof. Rogelio L. Ordoñez, Dean Roman R. Dannug, the author, Dean Amalia C. Rosales, Prof. Gandhi G. Cardenas. Standing: Maricar Asprec and Ryan Lipata (emcees), Prof. Jose Portugal, Prof. Emmanuel de Guzman, Prof. Jesus Flor Ramos-Nicolas, and Director Romulo T. Martin.

Two more . . .

(From page A 25)

Likewise, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said that the bombs were planted by a group with a political agenda, not a terrorist group.

"Our analysis is that this is not an act of a terrorist," Golez said in a press briefing. "More likely, (it is) an act of a political group that wants to deliver a political message."

Most police officials expressed surprise over the so-called IPFA, saying this was their first time they heard of such a group. Most were even unsure if there is such a group.

"This is the first time I have heard of such a group," said Chief Supt. Crescencio Maralit, director of police community relations.

The first bomb was found shortly after 5 a.m. at the MRT's Ortigas Station.

According to Supt. Sukarno Ikbala, Mandaluyong City police chief, the bomb was conspicuously placed in a brown envelope and was discovered by Noel Basia, an MRT security guard, on the second floor bridge-way of the terminal near the Poveda Learning Center on Edsa.

Ikbala said bomb experts from the Eastern Police District Office found inside the envelope an M-203 grenade cartridge, a rifle grenade, battery, blasting cap, digital watch which served as a timer, and five leaflets from a group calling itself the Indigenous People's Federal State Army.

Bomb experts detonated the bomb at 6:50 a.m. at a vacant portion of the Presidential Commission on Good Government compound.

The second bomb was found by security guard Allan Pen at 5:45 a.m. on the northbound MRT stairway in Kamuning.

Like the bomb found in the Ortigas station, the explosive device in Kamuning was also contained in a brown envelope placed on the ninth step of the MRT stairway, according to bomb technician SPO4 Arnulfo Franco. It was made up of two rifle grenades and a digital timer device.

Franco said the bomb maker used a special wiring system, which made it hard for him to defuse the bomb. He was able to defuse it at 7:30 a.m.

With reports from Reuters, AFP

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11	D-TOX
12	WE WERE SOLDIERS

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11	GOT 2 BELIEVE
12	A BEAUTIFUL MIND

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2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
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8	BANDITS
9	CLOSED
10	CLOSED
11	CLOSED
12	CLOSED

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8	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
9	WE WERE SOLDIERS
10	SNAKE CHARMER

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6	BIBINGKA
7	GOT 2 BELIEVE
8	13 GHOSTS

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8	GOT 2 BELIEVE

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2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
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4	D-TOX
5	JIMMY NEUTRON
6	GOT 2 BELIEVE

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3	JOHN Q
4	BANDITS

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2	JOHN Q
3	SNAKE CHARMER

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4	SNAKE CHARMER

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5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6	SHIPPING NEWS

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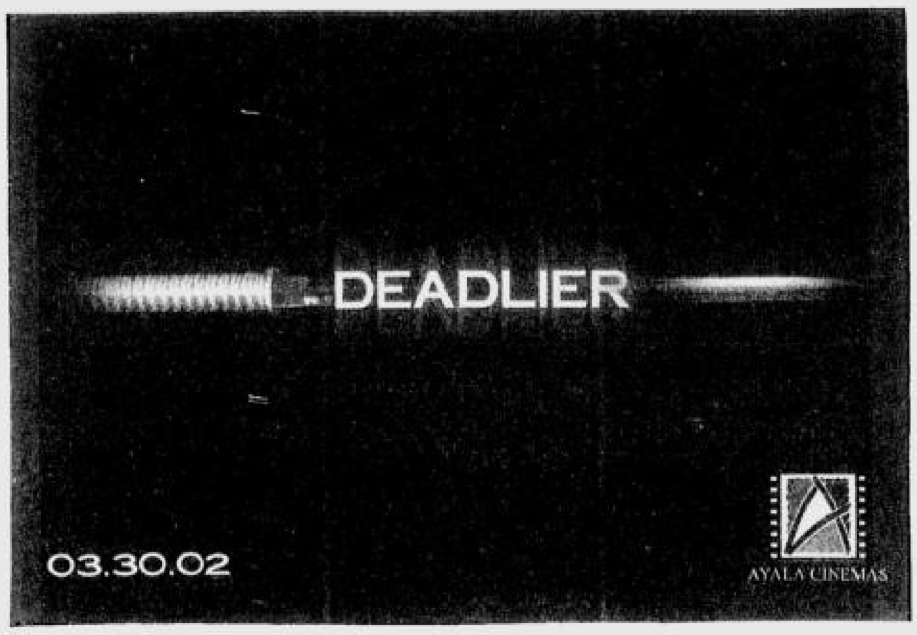
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3	
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4	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

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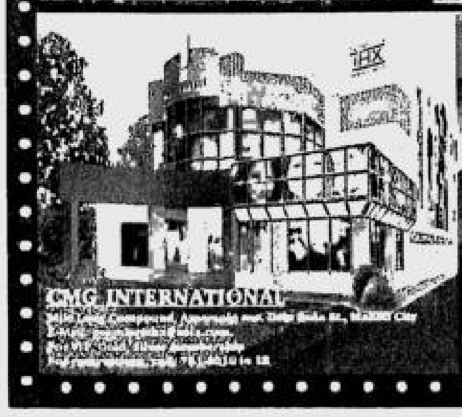
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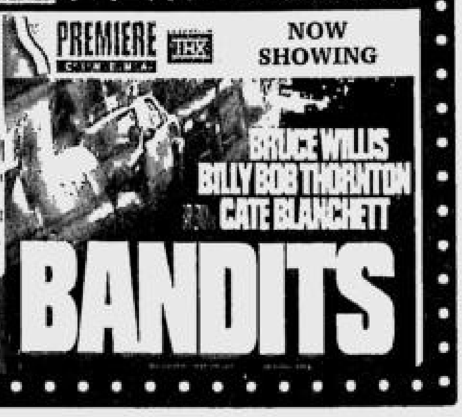

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'The Amazing Race 2' on AXN this month

OVER 29 million homes across Asia will be treated to more of the world's best reality programming when AXN premieres the second installment of the blockbuster adventure reality show, "The Amazing Race," this month.

AXN, the exclusive regional broadcaster of the series, airs the episodes every Thursday at 10 p.m., just a few hours after the American broadcast.

Replays are aired Saturdays at 9 p.m. and Sundays at 7 p.m.

"The Amazing Race" is created by Hollywood producer-director Jerry Bruckheimer, whose credits include box office success of such movies as "Top Gun," "Armageddon," "Con Air," "Pearl Harbor" and AXN's blockbuster series, "CSI."

"The Amazing Race 2" will see 11 new couples, each with a pre-existing relationship, set out on a trip of a lifetime around the world, in a bid to win the grand prize of $1 million.

Each episode will see teams competing in a series of tasks, some mental and some physical, before moving to their next destinations.

At the end of each episode, one team—the last to reach the designated "pit stop" or destination—will be eliminated from the race. The first team to arrive at the final destination wins the grand prize.

AXN is Asia's first and only cable TV network dedicated to action-adventure programming.

AXN Asia is available to more than 31 million households, 24 hours daily in Taiwan, India, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, South Korea, Macau and Papua New Guinea.

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-- Janice Crawford,"V"Magazine

PERFUME is an improvisational piece set in the world of fashion which centers upon: Lorenzo Mancici, head of the Mancici fashion empire, who learns on his way to his own surprise birthday party that he has prostate cancer; mega-rap star McBrilliant, who along with Lorenzo's son Mario, is launching a new line of street fashion; Roberta, whose partner Camille has just left their company after seven years; Janice, editor of a ruthless fashion magazine; Anthony, a hipster photographer and Arianne a typical supermodel diva.

CAST: Carmen Electra, Omar Epps, Peter Gallagher, Jeff Goldblum, Mariel Hemingway, Estella Warren & Michelle Williams

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

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MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HUBOG / TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	JOHN Q
ODEON-2	BANDITS
ROBEN	SNAKE CHARMER
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	OTHER SIDE OF LOVE / AMERICAN PIE 2
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	BIBINGKA
REMAR	SNAKE CHARMER
REMAR-2	BIBINGKA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	BIBINGKA
B	EVA LASON KAY ADAN
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	THE MAJESTIC
CINEMA-2	BANDITS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
CINEMA-2	ACHILLES
CINEMA-3	BIBINGKA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	D-TOX
CINEMA-6	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
CINEMA-7	EVA
CINEMA-8	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BANDITS
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	JOHN Q
CINEMA-12	JIMMY NEUTRON
CINEMA-14	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
CINEMA-15	GOT 2 BELIEVE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	GOOD ADVICE
CINEMA-2	JIMMY NEUTRON
CINEMA-3	BANDITS
CINEMA-4	JOHN Q
CINEMA-5	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-6	THE MAJESTIC
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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JOHN Q - P 13 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50	A BEAUTIFUL MIND- P 13 1:10, 3:55, 6:40, 9:30	THE MAJESTIC - GP 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10

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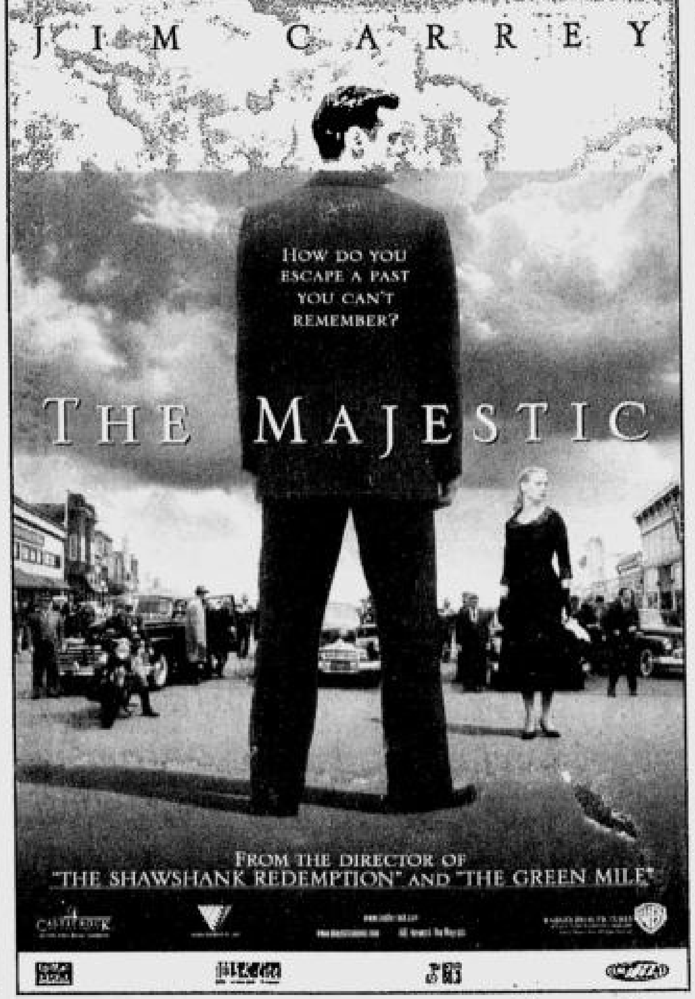

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THE MAJESTIC
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NGAYON, MAY KWENTONG IHAHATID!
ANGELIKA DELA CRUZ
ROBIN PADILLA
HARING SELDA
ANAK NI BABY AMA 2
Raven Villanueva Rommel Padilla and Johnny Delgado
DIRECTED BY DEO J. FAJARDO, JR.
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'PRE PERSONALAN NA 'TO!
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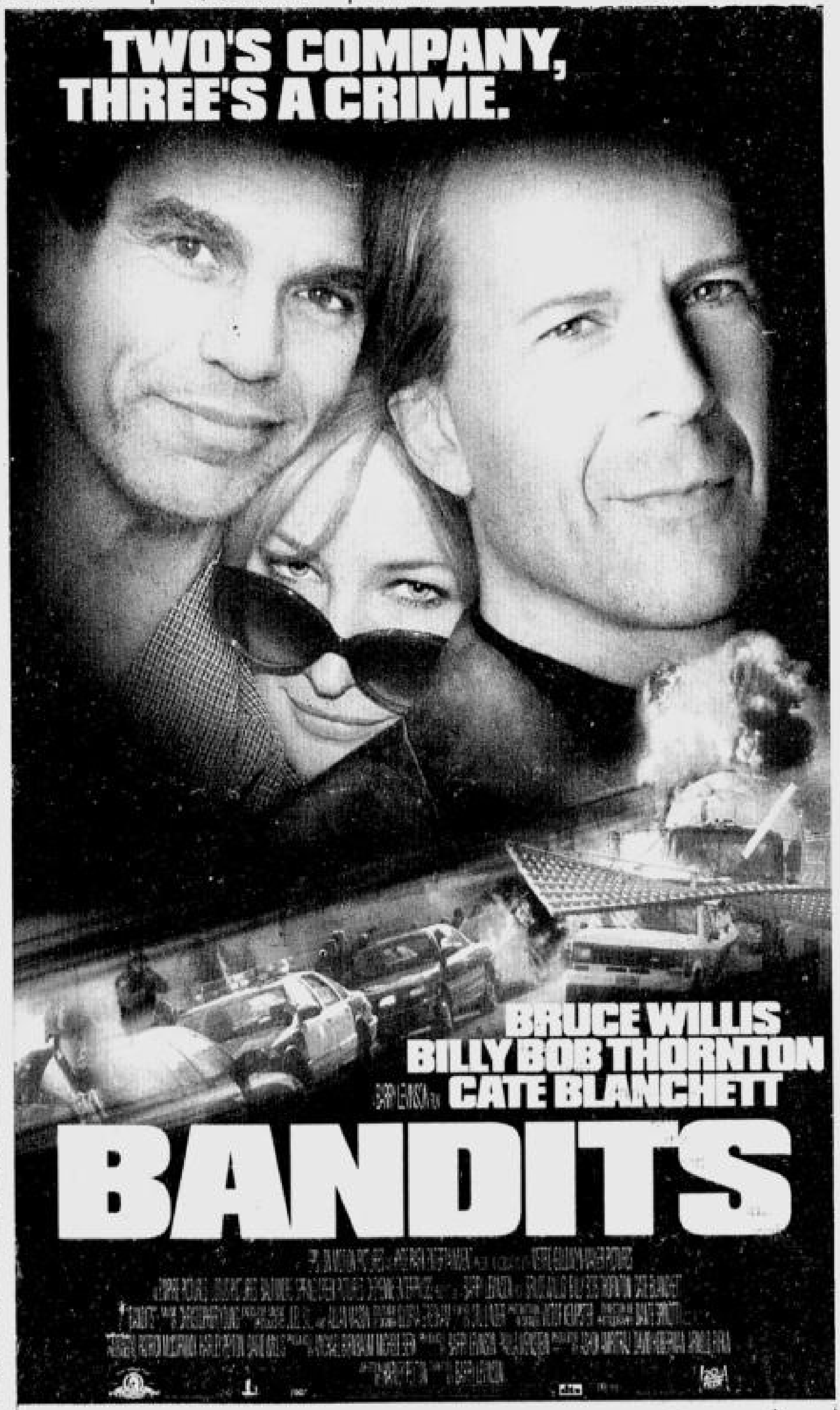

NOW SHOWING

Going up Down Under

By Leah Salterio

IN THE tradition of Hallmark Channel's grand-scale TV productions comes a new mini-series shot entirely in Australia.

"McLeod's Daughters" is a 22-part primetime series about five women whose lives are suddenly changed when they decide to take on the new challenges that fate has thrown their way.

One of the lead actresses in "McLeod's Daugthers" is Rachel Carpani, who plays Jodi Fountain, an ambitious teenager who wants to be rich and famous.

Also starring are Lisa Chappell and Birdie Carter as sisters Claire and Tess McLeod, Sonia Todd as Meg Fountain, Jessica Napier as Becky Howard, Aaron Jeffrey as Alex Ryan and Myles Pollard as Nick Ryan.

Rachel's name doesn't ring a bell among local viewers but in Australia, she has racked up impressive acting credentials, including starring roles in other productions.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER from Australia, Rachel said: "When I was offered the part of Jodi, my first reaction was, 'Are you sure you've got the right person?' I was totally excited. This is a great opportunity for me."

Born and raised in Australia, Rachel is of Italian-Australian descent. "I grew up speaking English at home, but I learned some Italian through my father's relatives," she said.

"I enrolled in a drama class in my last year in high school and I had no idea what to expect," she recalled. "I loved it, playing a character. I took it as a hobby. My parents encouraged me, but they didn't want me to pursue acting. They wanted me to get a college degree. At that time, I was angry. I told myself, 'Why can't I just go and act?'"

Passion

In her desire to give in to her parents' wish, she took up journalism at the University of Sydney.

When she realized that acting had turned into a passion, she studied at the Australian College of Entertainment at Macquarie University and at the Drama Works Company. Her TV credits include "All Saints" and "Home and Away."

Rachel deferred her last year in college to work on "McLeod's Daughters," but she hopes to return to school and study film.

She describes Jodi as the spoiled and ambitious one who dreams of moving to the city. Jodi also dresses well enough and her secret ambition is to be a personal stylist. She sees it as the first step to Hollywood and fame. She believes she is destined to become famous.

"Jodi is pretty much what I was like when I was about 14 or 15," Rachel said. "I thought I know everything. I was very annoying. I wanted to move out from where I was. I was lazy and spoiled. I was doing the typical things that teenagers do. I was enthusiastic."

To prepare for her part, Rachel had to spend three weeks in horse-riding camps in Sydney and Adelaide, where she was trained how to ride.

"I also got to push the cattle downhill and uphill and learned actual sheep-shearing. It was really an experience. Once we started filming the series, we had enough training and we knew exactly what to do."

Fulfilled

Like her character Jodi who has a secret ambition, Rachel wanted to become an actor.

"But now, I've fulfilled it," Rachel said. "I know there's a long way to go. So many people want to act. I just want to get more experience so I can improve in the acting field."

Asked if she wants to penetrate Hollywood like Australian actresses Cate Blanchett who is her idol, and Nicole Kidman, Rachel said, "Hollywood is not in my dreams. If I were offered anything over there, I would go try it and hope that I get a chance. But I won't just go there to sit and wait for the big break to come. I'd like to build up a lot more work here in Australia.

"I never lived anywhere except Sydney. I've traveled to many places, but I always go back to Sydney. It will be nice to experience Hollywood, but Sydney will always be my home. This is where everything started for my acting career. It's hard to imagine being away from a place you really love."

Hallmark Channel is seen on Home Cable, SkyCable, Destiny Cable and local PCC and Cable Boss affiliates.

HOMEBODY Rachel Carpani says Australia will always be her home.

Learning to forgive and even love Dad, the cad

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHAT makes "The Royal Tenenbaums" an interesting viewing experience is not so much its plot or theme, but the textured and antic performances turned in by its ensemble of gifted actors.

Gene Hackman and **Anjelica Huston** play the brilliant Tenenbaum kids' combative parents with relish, and **Ben Stiller**, **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **Luke Wilson** imbue their grown-up children with a mind-blowing array of psychological tics and shticks.

It's a riotous whirl of ids, egos and Greek tragi-comic parent-child and rival-sibling issues as the prodigiously talented Tenenbaum offspring have to again contend with Royal, their long-absent father, when he crawls home to die—or so he says.

Old wounds bleed again, with Stiller's character harboring the biggest resentment against their dad, the cad. And yet, it's Luke who turns out to be the most vulnerable child of all, when he tries to kill himself because he loves his sister, and yet she favors his best friend (played by **Owen Wilson**, Luke's real-life brother).

As parents and children square off, long-buried issues are exhumed, and this time, there's no escaping the need to finally resolve them. Thus, the movie is a bemused plea for other family members to similarly bury the hatchet—but not in each other's backs!

We enjoyed watching this acerbic movie about a family of neurotics, but it's only fair to point out that it isn't for all viewers. For one thing, its New York-Jewish mind-set may seem weird and indecipherable to some moviegoers unfamiliar with that cultural sub-stratum.

The best performance in the film is turned in by Paltrow, who is almost unrecognizable here as the super-neurotic playwright-daughter. With performances like this, Paltrow is serving notice that she intends to be known not just as a star, but also as one of the most versatile actresses working in films today.

Feedback

FROM **Gerardo B. Reynaldo**: "Your column of March 14 that attempts to depict the salient points in the life of **Muhammad Ali** is correct. Director **Michael Mann** did an excellent movie about the greatest living boxer. However, it is not his fault that he wasn't able to encompass the whole remarkable career of Ali.

"The movie, through **Will Smith**, gives a vivid description of the Ali personality, what he was like in his private moments (surprisingly average, with his bouts of self-doubt and some marital squabbles), and in his more visible, poetry-spewing public persona.

"It would be difficult however to go through everything that Ali did in his career. Mann, or any director for that matter, is hampered by the very fundamental faults accompanying the creation of a biopic.

"In 'Ghandi,' director **Richard Attenborough** succeeded in portraying **Mahatma Gandhi**, but he was roundly criticized for simplifying history and the circumstances leading to Indian independence.

"It would be next to impossible, for another example, to accurately film the life of **Winston Churchill** or **Franklin D. Roosevelt**, political heroes whose biographies are covered by multi-volume books.

"'Muhammad Ali' was a statesman of the other kind, the self-proclaimed and not exactly unpretentious 'people's champ.' He was one of the first multi-media artists to emerge in the '60s from the limited confines of their expertise, to expound on life, politics and religion. Like many larger-than-life characters before or since, he was very complex.

"The technical limitations of the cinema assure us that not everything told onscreen is the real truth.

"For boxing enthusiasts, I would recommend reading on the rise and times of Muhammad Ali in **David Remnick**'s excellent 'King of the World.'"

Brash Young cinema

BRASH Young Cinema, at the basement of the Unisys bldg., Esteban cor. De la Rosa sts., Makati City, will have a special screening on March 23 of "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1964) by **Pier Paolo Passolini**, "The Last Temptation of Christ" (1988) by **Martin Scorsese**, and "Sebastiane" (1976) by **Derek Jarman**. Call Francis at 8338-8968.

On April 23 at Titus, the films on view are "The Sacrifice" (1986), a cerebral drama by **Andrei Tarkovssky**, "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964) a musical by **Jacques Demy**, and "Caro Diario" (Dear Diary) (1994), an introspective comedy by **Nani Moretti**, dubbed the **Woody Allen** of Italian cinema.

Photo tilt for kids

SNACK (Summer Nature and Arts Camp for Kids) and Columbia Global Photo Sales are partners once again for the Konica Photography Contest for SNACK 2000 from April 8 to 13 at the Taal Yacht Club in Talisay, Batangas.

The contest is open to all SNACK 2002 participants. This year's theme, "Take Nothing But Pictures, Leave Nothing But Footprints," extols the beauty of nature. Call 721-0801.

All entries must use Konica Centuria or Konica VX films and be printed at Konica Photo Express or Columbia Photo shops, and accompanied by negatives.

At stake are prizes that include Konica Centuria cameras and films, and complimentary stays at the Matabungkay Beach Resort and Hotel in Lian, Batangas and Sitio Lucia Garden Resort in Santa Maria, Bulacan.

Other Snack 2002 activities include mountaineering, sailing, kayaking, pottery, archery, gymnastics, taekwondo, taebo exercises, acting, tie-dying and adventure games.

Holy Week movies on TV

CINEMA One presents these films for Holy Week at 8 a.m. weekdays: March 25, "Ingkong, Alpha at Omega" with **Eric Quizon** and **Perla Bautista**. March 26, **Donita Rose** in "Divine Mercy sa Buhay ni Sister Faustina." March 27, "Ama Namin" with **Christopher de Leon**. March 28, "Maranatha" with **Vic Vargas**, **Lorna Tolentino** and **Beth Bautista**.

'I'll never be a Larusso fan'

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

A BOSOM buddy of **Dingdong Dantes**' "official" girlfriend (to differentiate from his "show biz" GF) **Chinna Jocson** relayed to me that despite all the intrigues that have been hurled their way, Dingdong and Chinna's relationship is still going strong as ever.

Guess Chinna has mastered the art of not fighting with her "inferiors" but only with her equals. All girls who are not from show biz and who have gorgeous actors for boyfriends should bear this in mind so they can bear the unbearable.

Waste of time

THE LARUSSO mystery lingers on.

I'm still awaiting word from EMI-Paris for my phone patch interview with **Larusso** about the Megamall walk-out incident. The French chanteuse wants to set the record straight. To boost record sales? It remains to be seen if Larusso's songs will remain to be heard by her disgruntled fans.

"Hi Dolly,

"I am an avid follower of your column because I believe you write the truth and not just rumors. A few weeks back, I remember you writing some good things about Larusso. I was quite surprised since I was shopping in Glorietta 4 when I first saw her. She and some friends were inside Mossimo and a crowd had already gathered outside the store to, as you know, make *usyoso*.

"I was quite irritated since there was already a bottleneck in that area. Anyway, we went out of the mall at the same time and I saw her snub her fans while she smoked inside the mall. I expected her to at least say hi or fake a smile for her fans. Besides, G4 is a non-smoking mall.

"A friend who watched her show at the NBC Tent had to wait for two hours just for her to come out. The show lasted for only 30 minutes. Talk about waste of time!

"I am not a fan of hers and, because of the aforementioned incidents, will never ever be one.

"Sincerely yours, **Lorraine**."

For feedback, please e-mail luvludg@hotmail.com, friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com, *wateringhole2000@yahoo.com*

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MTRCB RATING PG-13
Exclusively at Power Plant Cinema, Glorietta 4, SM Megamall, SM Manila, Robinson's Galleria, and Robinson's Ermita
Angie Harmon
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Only a desperate man will take over a woman's job.
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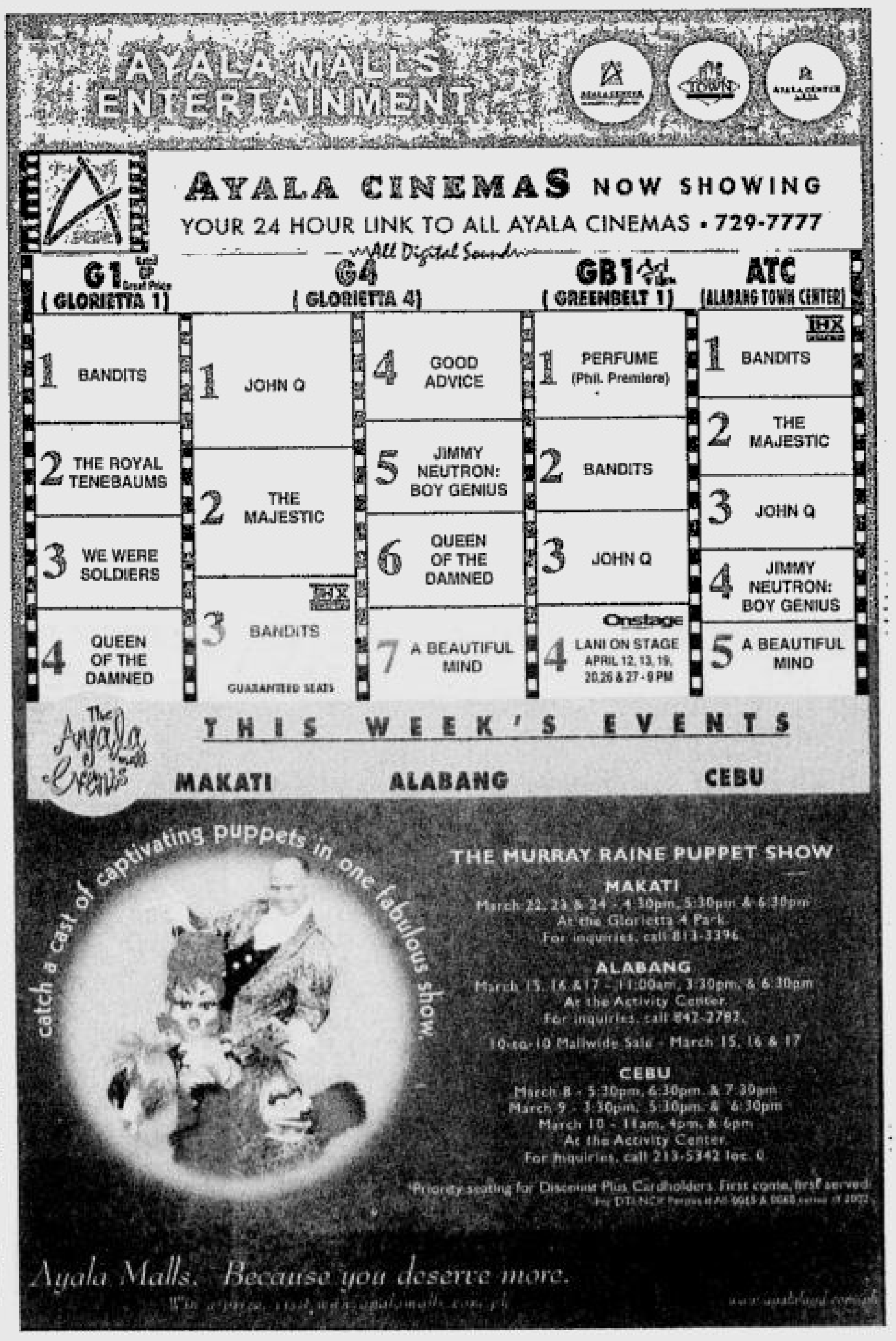

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G1 (GLORIETTA 1)	G4 (GLORIETTA 4)	G4 (GLORIETTA 4)	GB1 (GREENBELT 1)	ATC (ALABANG TOWN CENTER)
1 BANDITS	1 JOHN Q	4 GOOD ADVICE	1 PERFUME (Phil. Premiere)	1 BANDITS
2 THE ROYAL TENEBAUMS	2 THE MAJESTIC	5 JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS	2 BANDITS	2 THE MAJESTIC
3 WE WERE SOLDIERS	3 BANDITS GUARANTEED SEATS	6 QUEEN OF THE DAMNED	3 JOHN Q	3 JOHN Q
4 QUEEN OF THE DAMNED		7 A BEAUTIFUL MIND	4 LANI ON STAGE APRIL 12, 13, 19, 20,26 & 27 - 9 PM	4 JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS
				5 A BEAUTIFUL MIND

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At the Glorietta 4 Park.
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March 15, 16 &17 - 11:00am, 3:30pm, & 6:30pm
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CEBU
March 8 - 5:30pm, 6:30pm, & 7:30pm
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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

FILMMAKER Tikoy Aguiluz with scriptwriters and media people during the recent launching of Cinemanila Film Development Plan.

₱800,000 per winning script in Aguiluz' Cinemanila contest

By Alex Y. Vergara

"EVEN the best script is meaningless unless it is turned into a film. The scriptwriter is probably better off writing a novel."

Filmmaker Tikoy Aguiluz, chair of the Cinemanila International Film Festival, was speaking during the recent launch of the Cinemanila Film Development Plan. Modeled after similar efforts in Pusan and Rotterdam, the CDFP has been created to screen worthwhile scripts and—through a board of judges composed of film critics, academics, veteran filmmakers and scriptwriters—choose five of the best.

The CDFP hasn't finalized its list of judges as of last week, but Aguiluz promised to get only seasoned and independent names to fill the slots. In short, people won't be seeing the usual names and faces whose main qualifications are their show biz connections.

"This move is in response to the President's invitation for scriptwriters to come up with fresh story lines," said Aguiluz. "Being a filmmaker, I share her belief that a good film starts with a good script."

The CDFP has allotted P800,000 for each of the winning scriptwriters. Best of all, winners will be qualified to apply for the larger P50-million pot for eventual film production. President Macapagal-Arroyo, through the Film Development Foundation led by filmmaker Laurice Guillen, has set aside the amount to assist the ailing movie industry.

"I hope, indeed, Tikoy, that your theme 'Bagong Buhay, Bagong Cinema' can begin the preparation now for our very talented scriptwriters to come up with new and fresh story lines to compete for the P50-million subsidy for the next Metro Manila Film Festival," said Ms Macapagal during her opening speech at the 3rd annual Cinemanila International Film Festival last December.

The contest is open to both veteran and budding scriptwriters, except those whose works are already owned by major film studios. Rather than give the prize to these scriptwriters, the CDFP hopes to give others a chance to see their works in their entirety. Scriptwriters with existing feature-length scripts are qualified to join.

"This is a venue for scripts which otherwise won't make it to the big screen," said Aguiluz. "In other words, scripts that are deemed as non-commercial or too experimental by established producers."

Hopefully, the money from the government is enough to entice independent producers to produce the winning scripts in the Metro Manila Film Festival in December.

The CDFP will also tap different sources of funding other than the government. By inviting, for instance, Asian and European filmmakers during a roundtable discussion slated from Aug. 11 to 15, it hopes to connect new and independent Filipino filmmaking talents with alternative sources of funding. That's why the CDFP has required scriptwriters to provide English translations of their respective works.

The CDFP is accepting synopses of the scripts between now and May 14. Scriptwriters must come up with actual scripts by May 15 to be eligible for judging. Winners will be announced on June 1.

"Cinemanila is just the venue," said Aguiluz. "Our objective is to eventually draw international attention to the local film industry by coming up with films at par with the world's best."

And everything starts with a good script.

For inquiries, call Cinemanila International Film Festival at 412-7686 or 371-8821

Raymond Red directs TV ad

AWARD-WINNING director Raymond Red, who received the Golden Palm Award at the Cannes Film Festival two years ago for his film "Anino," comes up with yet another experimental and innovative approach to film language and technique in the 30-seconder TV commercial for Viva Mineral Water.

Titled "Truths" and now being aired on top-rating TV shows, the ad strives to inform in an entertaining manner the different characteristics of Viva Natural Mineral Water, such as its being cleansed by nature and science, its richness in minerals and the processes it goes through to ensure safety to consumers.

The TV ad was launched to critical acclaim in January this year and has caught the attention of viewers who found the commercial refreshingly different from the usual bottled water ads.

The careful selection of smart, young models to represent the target market helped a lot in making the TV ad.

Red was able to highlight the talents to add a youthful appeal to the commercial.

"I had to resort to innovative ways of shooting separate elements such as the foreground product and compose it seamlessly with talents in the background," he explains.

"I also thought of simple ways to achieve interesting camera moves along with composites without resorting to expensive set-ups."

As a film director, Red believes he has certain advantages in directing TV commercials.

"I feel that being a filmmaker, I'm able to develop a better grasp of film language," he says. "And having worked on a lot of short films, my approach to TV commercials is very much of the same discipline."

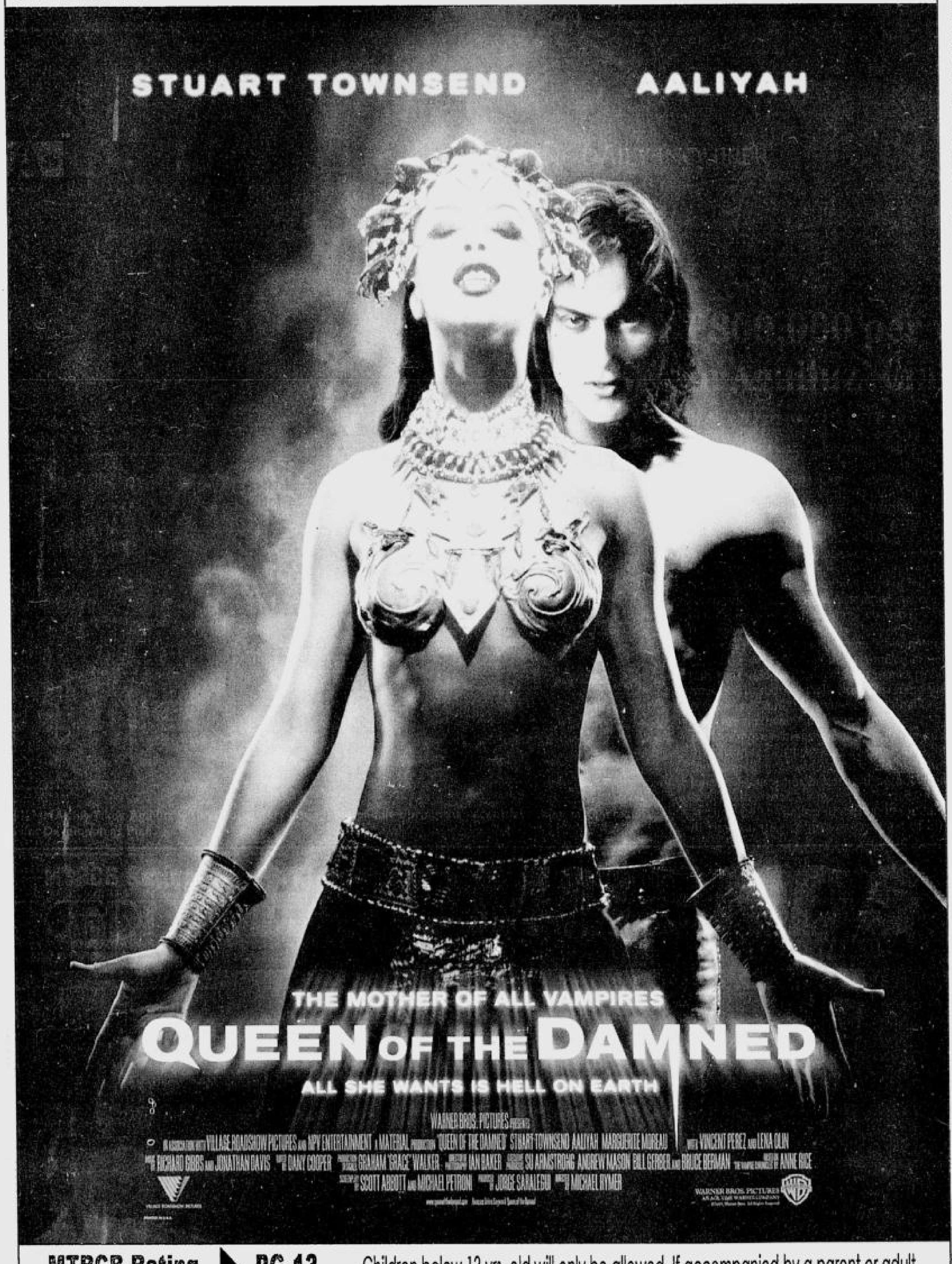
Red is known for his historical feature films like "Bayani" (1991) and "Sakay" (1993). He finds fulfillment in directing ads, which he does not find in films.

"What I really enjoy in doing TV commercials is the space for creative that the diverse technology now provides us," he says. "Since I am able to work with better equipment and new gadgets, the latest and state-of-the-art film gear, I learn a lot in the process of doing the job.

"Even if post-production, I am amazed at the possibilities with digital effects. I'm able to be more imaginative with the virtually limitless capabilities of the new high-end editing and effects hardware."

Red worked with top ad agency Ace Saatchi and Saatchi which handles the Viva Mineral Water account.

RJ 100 RECOMMENDS


STUART TOWNSEND
AALIYAH
THE MOTHER OF ALL VAMPIRES
QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
ALL SHE WANTS IS HELL ON EARTH
WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENTS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES AND NPV ENTERTAINMENT A MATERIAL PRODUCTION "QUEEN OF THE DAMNED" STUART TOWNSEND AALIYAH MARGUERITE MOREAU WITH VINCENT PEREZ AND LENA OLIN
MUSIC BY RICHARD GIBBS AND JONATHAN DAVIS EDITED BY DANY COOPER PRODUCTION DESIGNER GRAHAM "GRACE" WALKER DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY IAN BAKER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SU ARMSTRONG ANDREW MASON BILL GERBER AND BRUCE BERMAN BASED ON THE VAMPIRE CHRONICLES BY ANNE RICE
SCREENPLAY BY SCOTT ABBOTT AND MICHAEL PETRONI PRODUCED BY JORGE SARALEGUI DIRECTED BY MICHAEL RYMER
WARNER BROS. PICTURES

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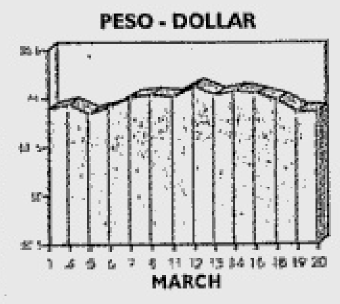
BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ◆ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

January budget gap on target at P15B

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



GRAPHS BY ROBERT ANDRES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P51.14 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 20, 2002

¥ 132.20 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 20, 2002

GOLD: $292.10/292.60

per ounce Hong Kong,
March 20, 2002

STOCK MARKET

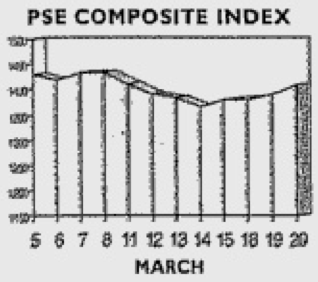
Shares end higher

SHARES closed higher yesterday as fund managers focused on window dressing as they close their books for the first quarter, traders said.

The sharp drop in treasury yields at Monday's weekly auction also continued to provide an impetus to bargain hunters, traders added.

After several attempts in past sessions, the 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index finally ended above its 1,400-point psychological resistance with a gain of 16.60 points, or 1.2 percent, at 1,407.54, adding to Tuesday's 0.7-percent rise.

"There was rotational buying in the (Asian) region, as funds shifted to the Philippine market," said Westlink Global Equities Inc. research manager Joseph James Lago. *AP*



(See stock market report on Page B2)

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUDGET deficit for January stood within forecast targets at P14.979 billion, the Department of Finance said yesterday.

The deficit was 134.6 percent bigger than the level a year ago but was lower by 7.8 percent compared with the government's target of P16.25 billion for the month.

"The numbers are as expected," Finance Secretary Jose Camacho told reporters. "We are going at a rate that will allow us to meet our quarterly targets."

The deficit represented 28.3 percent of the first quarter's programmed deficit of P52.93 billion. The government has said the full-year deficit will be brought in under P130 billion.

Revenue collections in January totaled P47.3 billion, (34.9 percent of the first-quarter program) and expenditure at P62.28 billion (33 percent of the first-quarter target).

The Bureau of Internal Revenue collected P35.037 billion, or 10.8 percent lower than its year-ago level of P39.294 billion. Meantime, about a fourth of the expenditures or P15.045 billion was used to service government debts although this was 0.2 percent lower than in January 2001.

Earlier this month, the government said its budget deficit in the first quarter could reach about 40 percent of the annual target due to front-loading spending to pump-prime the economy.

Dropping its cautious stance last year when the deficit reached P147 billion, the government is now accelerating its spending, mostly to pay contractors. Camacho said he hoped that the front-loading would help pump-prime the economy.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin explained that last year, the Macapagal administration had been very cautious in spending, mindful that the government had breached the deficit target in the last three years.

"The new government was on a learning curve last year. We want to be more aggressive this year," she said in an earlier interview.

But the government reiterated it was still confident of meeting the target for the full year.

Asked if the government was on track to hit the target, Camacho told reporters: "Yes, specially with the improvements in the economy that will be reflected in improvements in revenues down the road."

"We are hoping economic activity will be able to generate more tax revenues."

Analysts have said the country's budget deficit stemmed mainly from its inefficient revenue collection system, rather than expenditure.

Camacho also told reporters that the government was planning to issue only quarterly numbers rather than monthly ones.

"We figured that the quarterly numbers are more reflective," he said. ***With a report from Reuters***

Customs to focus on prosecution of smugglers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NEWLY installed Customs Commissioner Antonio M. Bernardo said the prosecution of smuggling syndicates was the agency's main weak point which must be addressed soon to boost its collections.

Bernardo said that past administrations had been competent in intelligence gathering and enforcement of Customs rules but they had been largely ineffective in filing suits against transgressors.

"I think we just need to put more political will in the prosecution of smugglers in order to show to the public that justice will be served to violators," Bernardo said.

In view of thinning imports and a reduction in tariff rates, Bernardo said the BOC must be more creative in finding ways to boost revenues such as toughening up on smuggling, collecting penalties on traders and banks, and maximizing the auction of seized goods. The BOC is aiming to generate P115.1 billion in revenues this year.

Bernardo said he was determined to make the BOC a showcase for a graft-free agency in keeping with the President's mandate to clean up the agency's image.

He admitted that by its nature, the BOC was a breeding ground for graft and corruption but that this could be solved through effective management of Customs officials and employees.

To address concerns of businessmen on the delays in the release of their goods, Bernardo said the BOC would adopt a more capable system to speed up processing of imports.

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Murder they rot

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

OUR police said they found bombs in Metro Manila. The FBI said terrorism would rise in the region soon. I am sure you cannot wait to hear from the Tariff Commission.

The commission is chaired by Edgardo Abon, about whose only uncompromising character, as I said earlier, I would not hesitate to say, is that he looks good in *barong*.

Just the other day, the commission ruled that cement imports caused no injury to the local cement industry. Oh, yeah? Okay, agreed, it's not injury. It is murder!

Sure, manure, and it's like saying our legislators hate going on foreign trips and, given the choice, would rather just spend our taxes to feed street children.

Today, imported cement already accounts for more than 20 percent of all the cement sold in this country. It is still rising. Three years ago, it was almost zero.

That is a fact—a solid undeniable fact! Even the most inventive commission on the face of this earth cannot deny it, whether they look good in *barong* or *bahag*!

* * *

HOW on earth the brilliant Tariff Commission arrived at its conclusion of "no injury" despite such a rapid rise in imports should be something for the books.

There is no injury, according to the brilliant commission, because the cement companies posted very little losses of more than P2 billion in one year.

Most of the local cement companies were losing not only their pants but also their *barong*. That's why, either they close down or they are on the verge of closing down.

The Tariff Commission said that's not injury enough. Tell you, those guys must be masochists. What did they want to see, anyway? For the cement companies to die?

If that's the case, I take my hat off to the commission. It is just being consistent. It has a knack for sensing imminent death. Remember the National Steel Corp.—the NSC?

Well, by the time the Tariff Commission ruled that the company needed tariff protection, the company had not only been murdered, it was already rotting.

* * *

IN so many big words, the commission said, even with the import surge, the locals did not lose a "significant" market share. All right, agreed, only 100 percent is significant.

But in Taiwan, the international trade commission, or however its Chinese name is translated, ruled "injury" on the Taiwanese cement industry. SERIOUS injury, okay?

You know what—the ruling was directed at cement imports from the Philippines. We were already cornering a big chunk of the Taiwanese market. All 4 percent of it!

Thus, the Taiwanese commission imposed a 65-percent tariff on Philippine cement. What's more, the tariff will be enforced for five years.

And here, our dear Tariff Commission believes more than 20 percent is not significant? Maybe it wanted to see the imports grab 100 percent of the market.

Then maybe, just maybe, the Tariff Commission will begin to propose that it should probably think of considering any possibility of injury in the off-chance.

* * *

NOBODY knows on what data the Tariff Commission based its decision. I'm sure they were not the same as those of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Last December, acting on a petition of cement makers, despite the strong lobby of importers and construction giants, the DTI imposed an import tariff on cement.

In making the decision, Trade Secretary Mar Roxas was only trying to save a lot of jobs in the cement industry. Oh, only tens of thousands of them, no big deal!

Well, thanks to the record-breaking surge in imports prior to Mar's bold decision, only about 4,000 workers in the cement industry have lost their jobs.

What is that number of additional jobless to this country? There's more where it came from! We have more than 4 million jobless, actually!

Some 20,000 other people relied on those poor cement factory workers who lost their jobs. Those people were otherwise known as their families. See? No injury at all!

* * *

WHAT, pray tell, was the commission's concern in its bright ruling? Well, it was us, the consumers! Whadayano, *kano*, it's the same line as that of the import lobbyists.

They have been saying that they only want to import a whole continent of cement because they only want to keep Filipino consumers happy. Some BS like that!

Unfortunately, importers buy cement abroad at P60 per bag. Then they simply turn around and sell it to us at P150 per bag. Consumer protection, my foot!

The problem with such a PR line is, unfortunately for us, consumers, the importation of cement did not bring down the price. You call that help, Edgar?

The construction giants say that cement importation helps them in these hard times. I say they are actually making a killing.

They bid for government projects, using the going price of cement here. Then they cheat. They buy cheap dumped cement from Indonesia.

One construction firm whose business is all with the government spends P86 per bag of cement from Indonesia. It gets paid for the project at P150 per bag. Do the math then tell me they care about us consumers.

2 brokers turn down PSE posts

By Doris C. Dumlao

TWO broker-directors of the Philippine Stock Exchange, both from the group of broker Robert Coyiuto, on Tuesday declined their appointment as officers in view of the ongoing protest against the election of Vivian Yuchengco as chair of the exchange.

Edwin Luy of Triton Securities and Eddie Gobing of Lucky Securities turned down their appointments as treasurer and assistant treasurer, respectively, saying, in a statement, that they could not work with Yuchengco while the row over her election remained unresolved.

"In keeping with our belief that you were not gifted with the mandate of the stockholders to lead the PSE, which was given to the Coyiuto group, we decline our appointment as treasurer and assistant treasurer of the PSE," Luy and Gobing said in a letter to Yuchengco dated March 19.

In the letter, Luy and Gobing addressed Yuchengco as director instead of "chair" of the local bourse.

Luy and Gobing were elected as treasurer and assistant treasurer in absentia during the organizational meeting held by the PSE board on March 13. The other officers appointed were Ernest Leung, president; Francisco Villaroman, corporate secretary, and, Aissa Encarnacion, assistant corporate secretary.

"The matter of her election is still under question. Rather than create more confusion later on, it will be to the best interest of the exchange if we just decline the appointments," Luy said.

During the meeting held last Wednesday, Yuchengco managed to get a quorum that allowed the board to conduct an organizational meeting even as the five directors belonging to the Coyiuto camp boycotted the board meeting.

The other directors with the Coyiuto group are former PSE chair Harry Liu of Summit Securities and Federico Lim of Belson Securities.

Yuchengco, for her part, has been calling for reconciliation with the Coyiuto group, which won more board seats reserved for brokers than Yuchengco's slate during the poll. In the election for the board chairmanship, however, Yuchengco got more votes as most of the non-broker directors of the exchange voted for her.

She said the responsibilities of the treasurer and assistant treasurer demanded that such officers must be based in the PSE head office in Tektite.

Aside from the five directors under the Coyiuto group and Yuchengco, the only remaining broker in the PSE board is Alicia Rita Arroyo of RCBC Securities who, however, is also based in Makati. The remaining eight of the 15-member board are non-brokers.

SEC urges exchange to conduct IPO this year

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has urged the Philippine Stock Exchange to proceed with its initial public offering this year in order to de-politicize its member-brokers and to comply with the law requiring the dilution of the total shares held by the industry to 20 percent.

In a forum with the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines yesterday, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said the reason behind the ongoing leadership squabble at the PSE was the delayed implementation of the provision in the Securities Regulation Code restricting industry ownership in the exchange to 20 percent.

"There is a lag because even before the voting brokers lost their shareholdings, independent or non-broker directors already came in," Bautista said.

Although the PSE complied with the SRC requirement to demutualize last August when it converted itself into a stock corporation, 100 percent of the voting shares was still held by stock brokers to date.

Since the non-brokers were mandated by law to control the majority of the board even if the dilution has yet to happen, Bautista said their votes could indeed "sway" the choice of a board chair.

"I think we should really push for the listing of the exchange so that its shares can already be traded," Bautista said.

The SEC chief said it did not compel the PSE to conduct the IPO last year when the SRC took effect due to poor market conditions.

"The market has already improved, so maybe they can now start selling their shares," she added.

"The law wanted some discipline among the brokers and that is the result of the BW (price manipulation scandal)," she said. "Even though we haven't prosecuted as many people as we want to prosecute, they (brokers) have the law to contend with.

"The problem now is whether they (brokers) will sell their shares because they are supposed to maintain only 20 percent of the voting stock," Bautista said.

PSE president Ernest Leung, for his part, said the PSE could start working on a business plan for the IPO by the second half of the year but added that the actual offering might not be possible this year. ***Doris C. Dumlao***

AsPac networks market seen to accelerate growth

TELECOMMUNICATIONS equipment supplier Alcatel sees huge potential in the Asia-Pacific networks market as demand for additional capacity increases.

In a briefing yesterday, Alcatel Phil. Inc. network operator support (NOS) business development director Ridha Bellamine said the Asia-Pacific market would grow faster than any other region in the world.

"The Asia-Pacific market is growing very fast. With 3G (third generation) and satellite video-on-demand coming, more capacity will be needed," he said.

With the big increases in demand, operator support will become a key component of the network business. "We should have the right tools and the right people to very quickly solve whatever problems our clients may encounter," Bellamine added.

Right now, NOS contributed only 5 percent to the overall Asia-Pacific sales numbers of Alcatel's network services division, Alcatel Phil. Network services division general manager Wulf Riedell said. But he projected that this number would grow to 10 percent to 15 percent by the end of the year to reach 30 percent by 2003 or 2004.

Abigail L. Ho

GOINGS-ON

Asia's growth prospects

KARL D. Jackson of Johns Hopkins University will speak on East Asia's prospects for a return to economic growth after a financial crisis at a luncheon forum, sponsored by the Asia Society Philippine Foundation and the Carlos P. Romulo Foundation, at the Makati Shangri-La on Friday, March 22.

Jackson will tackle the problems of the banking sector and its non-performing loans (NPLs), and the structural reforms that are needed to forestall permanent slow-growth status.

Jackson is the director of Asian Studies in the School of Advanced International Studies of the John Hopkins University in Washington, D.C.

Fuji Xerox awards

PHILIPPINE Fuji Xerox Corp. recently conferred two of its highest awards, the President's Club and the President's Award, to its most outstanding sales and non-sales employees, respectively, for last year.

For the sales award, the President's Club was given to Oliver Villar, PFX major accounts officer based in Southern Luzon, and the top President's Award went to Joey Alba, assistant manager for network operations.

DISCLOSURES

ITOGON-SUYOC Mines Inc. will hold its special stockholders' meeting on April 10, 4 p.m. at the Baras Room of Valle Verde Country Club, Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of March 1 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. Also, the company announced the resignation of Froilan Gervasio as director.

* * *

SEAFRONT Resources Corp. announced the resignation of Alfonso Yuchengco III as director and the subsequent election of Helen Dee as his replacement.

* * *

BAGUIO Gold Holdings Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 28 to May 9, 3 p.m. at the Park Ballroom of Century Park Sheraton Hotel. Stockholders of record as of April 10 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

TANDUAY Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 9, 4 p.m. at the Kachina Room of Century Park Sheraton Hotel. Stockholders of record as of March 25 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SOUTH China Resources Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from April 17 to May 8, 2 p.m.

* * *

SEMIRARA Mining Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 6 at the company's principal office located at 3/F DACON Building, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 8 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. Also, the company announced the resignation of Antonio Bernas as director. Elected to replace him was Victor Macalincag. ***Compiled by Marlcar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, March 20, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	100	100	100	100	9,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	66	65	65.5	103,700
China Banking Corp.	600	600	600	600	2,790
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35.5	36	35	36	1,221,900
First E-Bank Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	255,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	44	44.5	43.5	44.5	203,400
Philippine National Bank	61	64	61	64	13,200
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	18.75	19.5	18.75	19.5	24,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	21	21.5	21	21.5	3,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	70,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	210,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1410	1425	1410	1420	1,510
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1075	1100	1065	1100	36,070
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34	35	34	34.5	32,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	6,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	470,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	790	790	785	785	3,630
Ipeople Inc.	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.87	290,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	40,700,000
Piltel	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	730,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	525	530	510	520	128,730
Ivantage Corp.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	90,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	22,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	30	30.5	30	30.5	86,600
Manila Electric Co. B	43.5	44.5	43	43.5	831,900
Petron Corp.	1.82	1.88	1.82	1.84	6,267,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	210,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.48	2.48	2.46	2.46	822,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	1	1.14	0.9	1.14	1,090,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	10,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.6	0.61	0.58	0.61	1,280,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.75	13	12.25	12.75	506,200
RFM Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.56	561,000
Swift Food Inc.	2	2	2	2	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47.5	47.5	47	47.5	71,000
San Miguel Corp. B	63.5	65.5	63.5	65	552,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	5,131,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg. A	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
Ayala Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	1,000,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	106,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.53	0.57	0.53	0.57	550,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3	3.05	3	3.05	413,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.77	0.78	0.77	0.77	12,440,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	200,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	140,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	1,468,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.92	0.88	0.9	270,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	183,300
Ionics Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	35,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	81,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.86	0.88	0.86	0.88	1,730,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	2,300,000
Music Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	3,320,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	130,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	110,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	30,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	220,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.75	14	13.75	13.75	59,700
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	560,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.37	430,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	380,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	34.5	35	34.5	35	78,600
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	785	785	780	780	1,030
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	52,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	775	775	770	770	8,240
Jollibee Warrants	11.25	12.5	11.25	12.25	252,500
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0008	0.0008	0.0006	0.0006	495,000,000
RFM Corp. - Pref.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10	10	10	10	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10	10	10	10	3,000
Philweb Com Inc.-Warrants	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	51,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	17,477,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	20,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	90,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.48	4,600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	10,641,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	2,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	200,000
SM Development Corp.	1	1	1	1	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.7	3,994,000
MINING					
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	10,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines B	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	2,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	100,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	10,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	2,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.0046	0.0046	123,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	60,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.0048	18,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	39,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	220,000
Pacifica	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	12,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	150,000

CURRENCIES

March 20, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.132631	1.000000	51.1100
Japan	Yen	0.008584	0.007579	0.3874
United Kingdom	Pound	1.613773	1.424800	72.8215
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145226	0.128220	6.5533
Switzerland	Franc	0.682924	0.602954	30.8170
Canada	Dollar	0.714954	0.631233	32.2623
Singapore	Dollar	0.619601	0.547046	27.9595
Australia	Dollar	0.593000	0.523560	26.7592
Bahrain	Dinar	3.004486	2.652661	135.5775
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.302035	0.266667	13.6294
Brunei	Dollar	0.617911	0.545554	27.8833
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000113	0.000100	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.026073	0.023020	1.1766
UAE	Dirham	0.308384	0.272272	13.9158
Korea	Won	0.000861	0.000760	0.0388
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.882900	45.1250
Brazil	Real	0.483824	0.427168	21.8326
Denmark	Kroner	0.134580	0.118821	6.0729
India	Rupee	0.023277	0.020551	1.0504
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.298061	0.263158	13.4500
Mexico	New Peso	0.125001	0.110363	5.6407
New Zealand	Dollar	0.490762	0.433294	22.1457
Norway	Kroner	0.129124	0.114004	5.8267
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018998	0.016694	0.8532
South Africa	Rand	0.097389	0.085985	4.3947
Sweden	Kroner	0.110581	0.097632	4.9900
Syria	Pound	0.021992	0.019417	0.9924
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032407	0.028612	1.4624
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001245	0.001099	0.0562

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Loan servicing, not imports, blamed for cement firms' woes

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE TARIFF Commission has blamed the local cement industry's massive losses not on imports but on huge interest expenses on loans extended by the Big Three—Cemex, Lafarge-Blue Circle, and Holderbank—when it amassed 89 percent of domestic capacity.

Based on its ruling denying the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp.'s (Philcemcor) petition for punitive duties and quotas on imported cement, the Tariff Commission noted that in all industry acquisitions made since 1998, the Big Three had extended loans to their target companies.

Apo Cement has P1 billion in loans to Cemex; Republic borrowed P6.6 billion from Lafarge-Blue Circle to buy Fortune, Mindanao and Premier Cement; and Union Cement has P2.1 billion in debts to Holderbank.

This borrowing binge, the Tariff Commission said, led to an escalation of the industry's expenses from P993 million in 1997 to P2.3 billion in 1998 (when the foreign takeover began), to P3.9 billion in 1999, and to P5.1 billion in 2000.

The Tariff Commission noted in its decision that Philcemcor members generated P1.9 billion in operating income in 2000 when cement imports from Taiwan surged and its losses of P6.658 billion during the year was largely due to interest expenses.

The Consumers Union of the Philippine (CUP) and the Confederation of Homeowners Association for Reforms in Governance and Environment (CHARGE) said that interest expenses paid by Philcemcor members to their Big Three stockholders were, in effect, profit repatriations disguised as interest payments.

The Tariff Commission had previously ruled against the imposition of definitive general safeguard measures against cement imports in sharp contrast to the Department of Trade and Industry's findings that imported cement is hurting the local industry. It stressed that the markets need to remain open to imports to provide a "competitive discipline" to the Big Three.

Philcemcor has criticized the Tariff Commission decision as flawed and erroneous. Philcemcor legal counsel Susan Villanueva claimed that the Tariff Commission did not go beyond determining the link between the industry's woes and cement imports because the commission had already decided that the 21-percent share of cement imports in the domestic market was insignificant to hurt the industry.

But the Tariff Commission reported it could not find any link between imports and employment in the industry because employment surged 37 percent in 1999 even though imports had doubled from the previous year. Aside from interest expenses, the Tariff Commission said the industry's losses could be traced to the manpower and production cutbacks in the industry as part of a strategic move to streamline operations by mothballing 20 kilns from 1997 to 1999.

MONETARY POLICY BRIEFING

Monetary Board Member Melito S. Salazar Jr. (2nd from left) explains the monetary policy stance of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to officers and delegates of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) headed by Aburizal Bakrie (3rd from left) and the Indonesian-Philippines Business Council (IPBC) during their recent visit at the BSP. The Indonesians requested the Bangko Sentral to give its insights on possible transaction arrangements resulting from trading between the two countries.

PNOC drops plan to tap Malampaya

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Petrochemical Development Corp. has dropped plans to use Malampaya gas condensate for its proposed petrochemical complex in Bataan in view of talks on a liquefied natural gas supply deal with Pertamina of Indonesia.

PNOC president Thelmo Cunanan yesterday said in a news briefing that experts from Pertamina were studying whether the second phase of the $600-million naphtha cracker could use LNG as raw material to produce polymers.

"Unlike the first unit that would use only naphtha, the second unit would use other feedstock like LNG, liquefied petroleum gas or gas condensate," Cunanan explained.

The official said the second polymer plant would have the same capacity of the naphtha cracker at 600,000 metric tons a year.

"The second phase would cost another $600 million and we hope to start construction in 2007 for the plant to be onstream by 2010," he added.

Cunanan said they were no longer planning to buy gas condensate from the Malampaya project, as the gas was "too dry."

An industry source explained that dry natural gas would yield very little condensate.

Last year, PPDC president Jose Gangan said the state firm planned to source about 40-45 percent of the polymer plant's raw materials from the Malampaya consortium.

Gangan had said a supply deal with Malampaya operator Shell Philippines Exploration BV meant savings for PPDC. Gas condensate would be cheaper than imported naphtha.

Aside from using Indonesian LNG as feedstock for PPDC's polymer plant, PNOC also plans to sell the LNG to power producers.

"The (oil-fired) Limay power plant or any other plant in the area are possible markets—if these would be converted into gas-fed ones," Cunanan said.

SEC plans tighter audit rules

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission plans to tighten the rules on off-balance sheet financing in the Philippines as among other fresh measures to prevent an auditing debacle similar to what led to the fall of American utility giant Enron Corp.

In a forum with the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines yesterday, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista also said the SEC was studying the merits of requiring the regular rotation of corporate auditors.

She also stressed that the SEC would push for the segregation of audit work and the non-audit work, or services that range from advise on restructuring to due diligence on acquisitions in order to prevent conflict of interest.

The SEC chief asked Finex members to help the government draw up measures to tighten the rules on off-balance sheet financing, noting that special-purpose entities used to move assets and debt off the balance sheet were at the heart of the probe into Enron's collapse.

"Partnerships and trusts, most of them invisible or incomprehensible to ordinary investors, were used in the Enron case to enhance its earnings and maintain its credit rating," she said.

"Off-balance sheet transactions have become widely adopted by companies in recent years to hide debt and massage financial performance," she noted.

Bautista stressed that the Enron case had become a catalyst for much-needed change in corporate governance and the accounting profession in general.

"Like the US SEC and UK Financial Service Authority, we are considering whether companies should rotate their auditors every three years," Bautista said.

However, Bautista said that among arguments against the compulsory rotation was that this would likely reduce audit quality in both the early and late years of an auditing engagement. She said an alternative approach proposed by some auditing firms was the rotation of partners and staff on an engagement.

Bautista also noted that in the Enron case, the accounting firm was both the auditor and the consultant/partner to management in their appraisal of the special-purpose vehicles used.

"Maybe the big firms here should start separating the audit work and non-audit work, if not by setting up a separate corporation, by creating a Chinese Wall within the organization," she said.

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Philippines celebrates first International Sleep Well Day

TODAY, March 21, the Philippines celebrates International Sleep Well Day, joining European countries and Asian neighbors such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

The event, which was first observed in Europe last year, is being celebrated for the first time in the country.

Spearheading meaningful sleep awareness activities to mark Sleep Well Day are Sanofi-Synthelabo Philippines and the Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Center (CSDC) of St. Luke's Medical Center.

To raise public consciousness on the importance of sleep to health and productivity, Sanofi-Synthelabo is launching a sleep awareness campaign dubbed "Open Your Eyes to Sleep" in collaboration with CSDC.

A program of activities has been lined up on March 21 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, including a Sleep Experts Hour, a lay-forum focusing on sleep disorders. Sleep experts from St. Luke's CSDC and the newly formed Philippine Society of Sleep Medicine will address all problems related to sleep.

A media briefing on insomnia and its many possible causes will also be held. Dr. Ma. Felicidad Soto, a noted neurqlogist and head of the first sleep disorders clinic in the country, and her team of CSDC consultants will meet the press to give an overview of insomnia and its management.

The results of a survey conducted by ISIS on insomnia will also be announced during the media briefing.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has stressed that sleep is an integral part of life and is important for mental alertness, performance at work and general health. "An information campaign on the vital need of sleep complements our government's health care program," she points out.

Everyone is enjoined to mark International Sleep Well Day, a day designed to help us sleep better.

MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR PIZZA HUT

Pizza Hut was recently awarded the coveted Marketing Excellence Award, besting 10 other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The award was in recognition of the highly successful Cheesy Crust pizza launch that resulted in unprecedented sales growth for Pizza Hut. Shown is Michael Tang, Tricon Asia-Pacific VP for marketing, Elaine Guzman, Pizza Hut Philippines VP-marketing, Grace Magno, Philippines marketing consultant, and Ray Colon, VP-marketing of Tricon International in Dallas, Texas.

1ST SM BOWLING CUP MONTHLY WINNER

Edward Coo recently won the 1st SM Bowling Cup's monthly center finals for February at the SM Megamall. He will be competing with other center finals winners for the national finals in May 2002 for exciting cash prizes—P100,000 for the champion, P50,000 for the first runner-up, and P25,000 for the second runner-up. Organized by the SM Bowling Center, the 1st SM Bowling Cup tournament sponsors include Prudential Guarantee and Assurance Inc., Nature Spring, Adidas, and Pepsi. Shown is Coo being awarded his cash prize from SM Megamall Bowling Center manager Arthur Razote.

'PEACE NA TAYO!'

Ventriloquist Ony Carcamo and his wacky wooden figure Kenet have just ended a series of shows for school children in line with the nationwide celebration of the National Arts Month last month. His show 'Peace na Tayo!' was performed in Dominican College, St. Mary's College, University of Santo Tomas, Claret, Letran, Ateneo de Manila, Angelicum College, and the National Museum. This unique live educational ventriloquism program, presented by White King Hotcake Mixes and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, talked about peace and friendship. Ony, shown here at the front gate of the Ateneo Henry Lee Irwin S.J. Theater with Kenet, White King mascot, and Ateneo grade school students, has also been doing vent shows in the Manila Zoo, Museo Pambata, in hospitals, and in many living rooms.

Rustia, Mahiwo speak at realtors' induction

ANDRES I. Rustia, assistant governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, will speak before the Institute of Philippine Real Estate Consultants Inc. (Iprec) and the Philippine Realtors Foundation Inc. (PRFI) on the occasion of the joint induction ceremonies of the two realty associations. The event will be held on March 22 at the Peninsula Hotel in Makati City.

Ma. Teresa A. Mahiwo, director of the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection (BTRCP) under the Department of Trade, will administer the induction of the Iprec and PRFI officers and directors.

Rustia is expected to speak on the state of the non-performing assets of the country's banking system; the effects of the entry of foreign financiers, and the proposed legislation on securitization and asset management company in the realty market and in the economy; and the role of real estate service practitioners under the emerging scenarios.

Mahiwo, on the other hand, will deliver her message before the real estate service practitioners, whose practice is currently being regulated under the office of the BTRCP director.

Leading the inductees are prominent real estate leaders Oscar P. Garcia and Antonio M. Constantino, president of Iprec and PRFI, respectively. The two presidents will then induct the new members.

The other Iprec inductees are Diogenes A. Barredo, vice president; Federico C. Cuervo, secretary; Adriana M. Macavinta, treasurer; Meneleo P. Albano, Ernesto C. Ambrosio, Ernesto M. Angeles, Alejandro R. Barcarse, Herbert E. Buot, Ramon P. Tioseco and Zacarias F. Quintin, directors. Rodolfo G. Leonen is the immediate past president and ex-officio director.

The Iprec board of advisers are Geronimo J. Manzano, Ernesto G. Castaneda, Artemio U. Valencia, Gideon F. Benedicto, Victorio V. Soliven, Reynaldo N. Asuncion, Lolita C. Manuel and Amelita E. Sarmiento.

Other PRFI officers to be inducted are Oscar P. Garcia, chair of the board of trustees; Myrna A. Tort, vice president; Victor V. Benavidez, secretary; Lucille J. Cuasay, treasurer; Adriana M. Macavinta, PRO; Cherry Rodriguez, auditor; Ramon P. Tioseco, Juan B. Dayag, Amelita E. Sarmiento, Wayne T. Malilay, Luis Melchor V. Serquina, Cesar A. Arnaldo Jr., Herbert E. Buot and Daisy J. Kokseng, trustees. Zacarias F. Quintin is the immediate past president and ex-officio trustee.

PRFI consultants are Geronimo J. Manzano, Lolita C. Manuel, Rodolfo G. Valencia and Victorio V. Soliven.

SCJ-PHA PARTNERSHIP

SC Johnson Philippines Inc. (SCJPI) recently forged a partnership with the Philippine Hospitals Association (PHA) for the acceptance and recommendation of Off! Mosquito Repellent Lotion. Through this partnership, PHA has given its nod of approval on the efficacy of Off! Mosquito Repellent Lotion and highly recommends its use to protect consumers from disease-carrying mosquitoes and other insects, both indoors and outdoors. PHA, composed of 2,070 member hospitals, is a nationwide organization of private and government hospitals with doctors and medical professionals as members. The partnership makes Off! the first and only insect repellent lotion accepted and recommended by medical experts nationwide. Shown is Dr. Tiburcio Macias, PHA president (left), and Antonio Feria, Jr., SCJ marketing manager shaking hands, while Carlito Fernandez (left), manager of PHA-TV and Dr. Fidencio Aurelia, vice president of PHA-Visayas, look on.

Bits & Clips

Home fair at The Enterprise

KEEGAN Myers Events and Exhibits is holding an exhibit dubbed "Building Blocks: The Home Essentials and Construction Fair" until March 22 at Level 3, Tower 1, Loft Area of the Enterprise Center, Makati City. The event showcases various products and services, such as construction supplies, architectural and engineering consultancy, real estate, interior design, land development and home furnishings. For inquiries, call Malou Cadacio at 633-9662/638-9608, or 0916-8319489.

QCDS lecture

3M Espe and the Quezon City Dental Society, jointly committed to continuing education, will host a lecture by Dr. Ian Meyers, an eminent international authority on Aesthetic Dentistry, at the 51st QCDS Annual Convention on March 22, Friday, at the Quezon City Sports Club (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Meyers will share his views and experience on the "Keys to Success", with contemporary restorative materials. For more information, call Rica Popple/Bianca Suiza of 3M Phils. at 813-3781, local 837/852/439, or Dr. Lilian Ebuen, QCDSI president-elect at 727-9260 or 727-8665.

PIIE national congress

THE PHILIPPINE Institute of Industrial Engineers (PIIE) will conduct its third National Congress on March 22 with the theme "Building e-Competencies for Operational Excellence" to be held at Edsa Shangri-la Hotel. The keynote speaker is DTI Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II. Another special guest speaker is DOST Undersecretary Fortunato de la Pena. PIIE has invited prominent experts to serve as speakers relevant to IT applications in enhancing competitiveness in the workplace. For inquiries, visit www.piie.org, or call the secretariat/officers of PIIE at 879-8381, 879-8103, 913-2288, and 671-9497.

HON. JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
THEME : UNLOCKING THE BOTTLENECKS TO STAY ON TRACK

CAMACHO AT PCIE

Department of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho (second from right) is the guest speaker of the Philippine Chamber of Industrial Estates and Ecozones (PCIE) with the theme Unlocking the Bottlenecks to Stay on Track. Shown from left is lawyer Lutgarda Baquiran-Peralta, Food Terminal Inc. president; PCIE treasurer Elvira Adorable (director, tax services of Joaquin Cunanan and Co./PricewaterhouseCoopers); PCIE trustee Rufo Colayco (president and CEO of the Bases Conversion Development Authority); PCIE president Rodel Emmanuel C. Adiviso (managing director of Site Search), and PCIE auditor Ernesto Tan (senior vice president of Asea One). Camacho was also awarded an honorary membership of PCIE during the gathering.

BPI Family acquires ABN-Amro's P3.4-B consumer loans portfolio

BPI Family Bank, the consumer banking subsidiary of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) has announced its acquisition of the consumer loans portfolio of ABN-Amro Bank Philippines.

BPI Family Bank president Aurelio Montinola III said that the P3.4-billion transaction is made up of P2.9 billion in auto loans and P500 million in mortgage loan as of Jan. 31, 2002.

Montinola said this purchase is consistent with BPI Family Bank's strategy of expanding its consumer finance portfolio via acquisitions to complement organic growth. The transaction further solidifies BPI Family Bank's leadership position in the consumer banking business.

ABN-Amro has also committed to help expedite the transfer of the ABN-Amro consumer loan portfolio by providing support for backroom operations as well as the necessary IT systems.

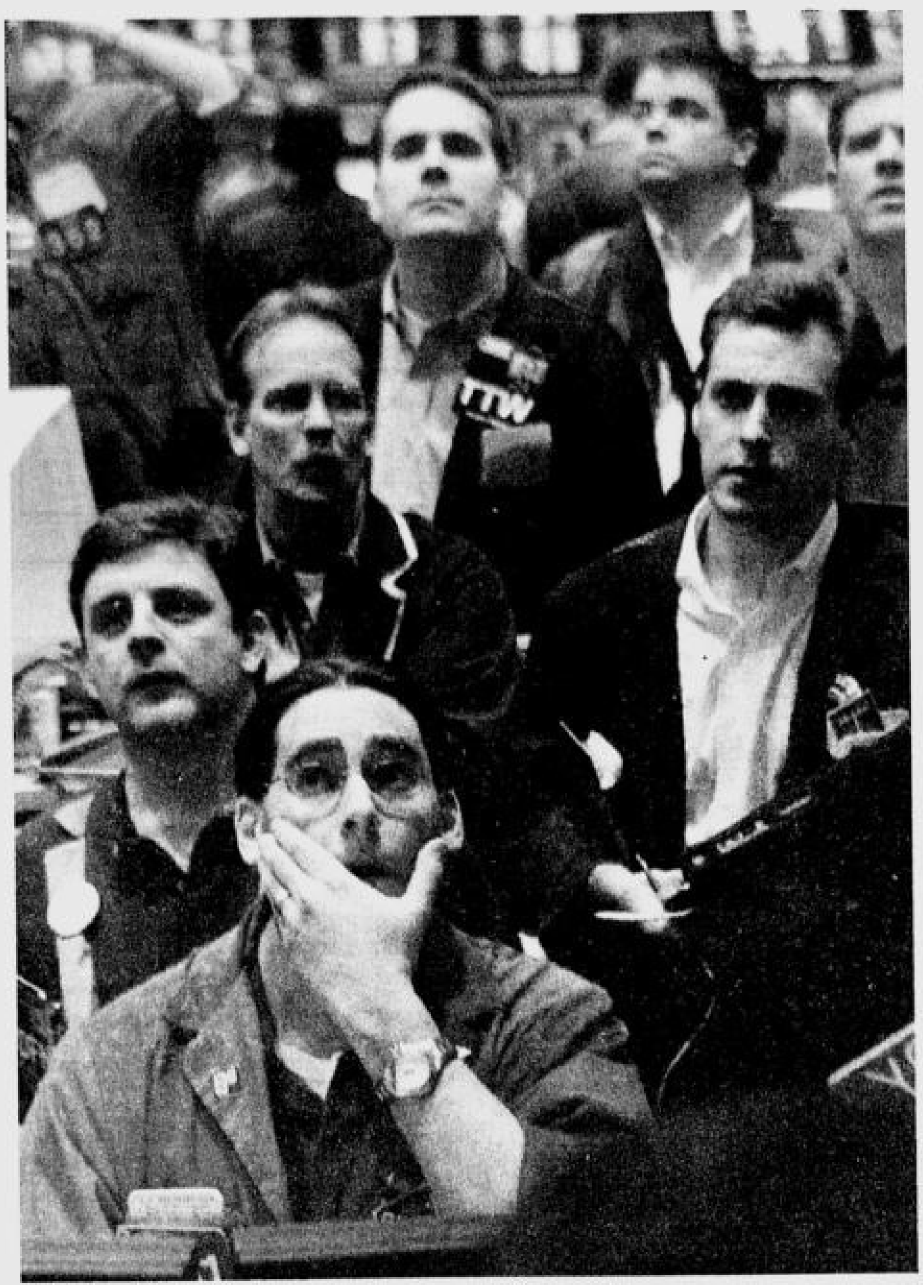
Montinola said that the final transfer of the portfolio is still subject to regulatory approvals and is expected to happen 90 days from signing.

CountryStyle at Malate

COUNTRYSTYLE donuts, one of Canada's food chains, recently opened at the tourist and gimmick hub of Manila. It is located at the corner of M.H. del Pilar and San Andres, beside the historic Malate church. Taste the difference of CountryStyle donuts, muffins, brownies and other bakery goodies alongside CountryStyle superb coffee, a special blend of carefully selected beans, roasted to perfection and ground just before brewing. CountryStyle also serves healthy meals, such as breakfast b'eggels, signature sandwiches, soups, salads and spaghetti made up of a secret blend of herbs and spices which captures the Filipino taste. CountrStyle Malate is open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

ANNA FEGI AT 'FESTIVE EPISODES'

'Festive Episodes', the concert series of Festival Supermall in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, recently featured sultry belter Anna Fegi and the Passage Band. Seattle's Best Coffee, Four Corners Ristorante, Greenwich Pizza, Hallmark Balloons, Blossoms and Twigs and San Miguel Beer supported the event. Shown with Anna Fegi are (from left) Festival Supermall's ICS marketing manager Hermi Sabile, marketing coordinator Michelle Lapatha, ad and promo manager Gina Lynn Go, and marketing coordinators Liza Bautista, Marex Gaba, Gail Soledad, Al Reyes and Mayi Villena.



TRADER David Melam (front, center) and other traders in the group trading Hewlett Packard stock options on the floor of the Chicago Board Options Exchange keep an eye on the trading boards during trading in Chicago. Hewlett-Packard Co. on Tuesday claimed victory in the hotly contested shareholder vote for its acquisition of Compaq Computer Corp., but dissident board member Walter Hewlett refused to concede defeat, saying he was still optimistic the deal had been rejected. REUTERS

Asian growth forecasts improve, but risks remain

SINGAPORE—Will Asia's vices of last year become its virtues this year?

Economists have raised their growth forecasts for most Asian countries, figuring that the exposure to the United States which dragged them down last year will lead them to recovery in 2002, according to a Reuters survey of more than 100 economists.

But hopes that signs of an economic pickup in the United States will translate into a recovery in exports from Asia hang on the performance of the key US technology sector.

"The main driver and therefore the main risk here is the US tech outlook," said David Fernandez, head of sovereign research at JP Morgan in Singapore.

That is certainly true for Singapore, where tech exports accounted for some 46 percent of the island's gross domestic product in 2000.

The survey shows a significant upgrade of Singapore's growth outlook to an average of 3.7 percent in 2002 from 1.7 percent when the same poll was conducted in December.

But it should be outstripped by Korea, which led the export-orientated countries in the survey with a forecast of 5.2-percent growth, up from the previous forecast of 4.2 percent and growth of 3 percent in 2001.

Korea avoided a recession last year on the back of robust domestic consumption.

The rosy growth scenarios in the survey are based on a turn in the US corporate profit cycle, which will infuse companies with the confidence to resume spending on technology.

Still, there is a risk that spending won't come through.

"A meaningful increase in business investment is still a forecast for the US economy," said Fernandez.

Such investment contracted 13.1 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, he said. A turnaround to a 6-percent growth by the second quarter this year depended on a "considerable improvement on the profits outlook," he added.

Fernandez said a record US inventory drawn down of about $120 billion in the fourth quarter had positive implications for Asian growth.

But not everyone believes that heralds a resumption of technology spending.

Geoffrey Barker, chief economist at HSBC in Hong Kong, said an improvement in profits would follow the inventory clearance, especially after "diabolical" earnings reports from tech firms last year. *Reuters*

Fed keeps key rates steady, shifts to neutral

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve policymakers voted Tuesday to keep key short-term interest rates unchanged but signaled a shift to a "neutral" stand on future actions to reflect the recovery in the US economy.

The Federal Open Market Committee left the federal funds target rate unchanged at 1.75 percent. But the change in outlook was seen as laying the groundwork for rate increases later this year to halt inflationary pressures as the economy pulls out of recession.

In a statement, the panel said the US economy was "expanding at a significant pace" but that the strength of the recovery was "still uncertain."

The FOMC ended a stand in place since December 2000 that the risks in the economy are tilted toward weakness, and thus in need of further rate cuts.

Although the Fed took no action at its January meeting, it maintained the easing "bias," saying weakness was a greater risk.

But on Tuesday, the Fed appeared to confirm the outlook of most economists that the US economy is back on track.

"The committee believes that, for the foreseeable future, against the background of its long-run goals of price stability and sustainable economic growth and of the information currently available, the risks are balanced with respect to the prospects for both goals," the statement said. *AFP*

Next big job for Hewlett-Packard's Fiorina is making merger work

PALO ALTO, California—Now that Hewlett-Packard Co. chief executive Carly Fiorina has claimed victory in a hard-fought campaign to get shareholder approval to buy Compaq Computer Corp., she faces an even bigger challenge: getting 135,000 employees to work together.

Since the companies announced the proposed acquisition in September, they have said the tricky question of integration has been at the top of the list of things they have to get right.

Fiorina said on Tuesday that more than 500,000 man-hours were expended on planning the combination, and the team working on the details of the integration now boasted about 900 HP and Compaq workers.

But judging from the negative tone of the comments of some HP and Compaq workers at the special shareholder meeting in Cupertino, California, Fiorina and her top management still have a tough job ahead of them.

Compaq employees who came from France to oppose the merger wore placards with such choice phrases as "Carly's dream is a nightmare for workers," setting the tone for a meeting that was clearly hostile to management.

Dissident board member Walter Hewlett, leading opponent of the merger, was greeted at the meeting in a Silicon Valley concert hall by a standing ovation.

One longtime HP employee, who said while he loved the company, told Fiorina during a question and answer session at the meeting that should the $20-billion deal calling for HP be approved, he would quit and find another job.

Others will not have a choice. Management plans to cut some 15,000 positions across the two companies, with the bulk of those positions to be eliminated within the first six to nine months after the merger closes.

"Does employee opposition make integration more difficult?" asked Charles O'Reilly, a professor at the graduate school of business at Stanford University. "Of course, of course."

"Merger integrations are very, very hard and take an immense amount of effort, and if people are questioning the wisdom of the merger, that makes it much harder." *Reuters*

Progress seen in anti-poverty fight despite conflicting approaches

MONTERREY, Mexico—Rich nations have made encouraging new commitments in the war on want, UN chief Kofi Annan told a development conference here, but an unseemly row over who is doing more to help the poor could mar the campaign.

As ministers and officials from more 170 countries put the finishing touches on preparations for a two-day summit starting Thursday, it became apparent the anti-poverty front was far from united.

An estimated 50 heads of state and government were expected in this northeast Mexican city in a high-profile UN bid to kick-start a flagging initiative to lift more than a billion people out of poverty.

The leaders will be asked to approve a bland 16-page document called the Monterrey Consensus, in which they pledge to do more to combat poverty but make no new financial pledges.

Nevertheless, both the United States and the European Union in the days leading up to the conference were spurred into announcing proposals for a fresh injection of official funds earmarked for development aid.

Annan said Tuesday that the fresh US and EU pledges signaled a welcome engagement by rich countries to commit resources to stamping out poverty.

"These decisions suggest that the argument on principle has now been won," Annan said.

But he cautioned that the amounts "will not be sufficient by themselves," insisting that an increase of at least $50 billion a year in worldwide development aid would be needed to make a real dent in the global poverty. *AFP*

Motor vehicle sales up 31% in Asean

SINGAPORE—Motor vehicle sales in Southeast Asia's top four markets—Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines—rose 31 percent in January from a year earlier, an industry report released here showed Wednesday.

Sales totaled 92,740 units in January from 70,929 in the same month last year, Automotive Resources Asia Ltd. said, adding this augured well for the market outlook this year.

"Malaysia and Thailand started the year well. Their high sales records reverse the usually slow demand in January," said May Arthapan, an associate at the Bangkok-based ARA.

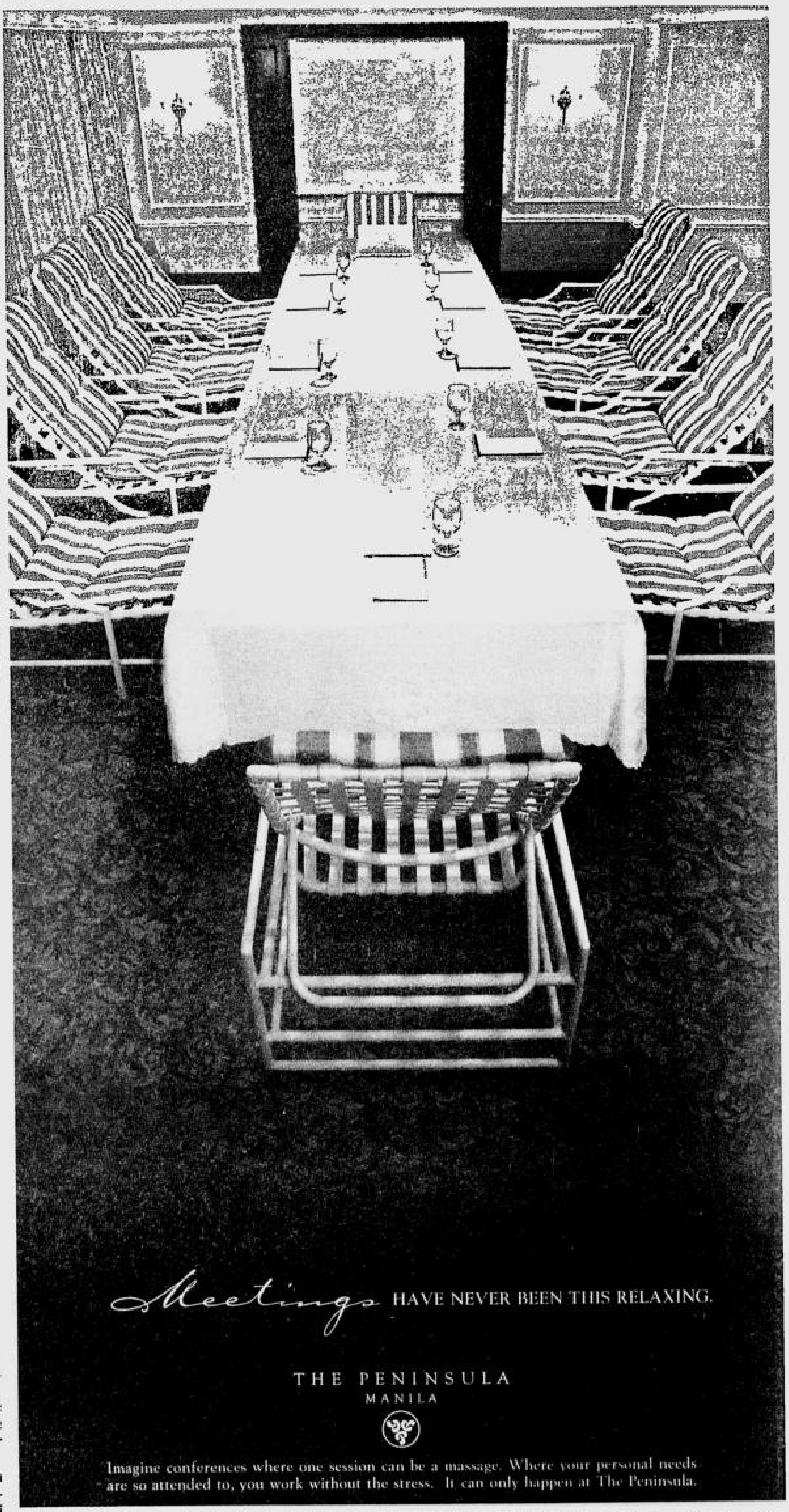
"Overall market trends suggest (a) positive outlook in the regional automotive market in 2002," she said.

Sales in Malaysia soared 47 percent on the year to 39,646 units, up from 27,045 vehicles. Thailand sales jumped 45 percent to 24,727 from 17,031, while Indonesia sold 22,859 units, higher by 8 percent from the 21,117 vehicles sold the previous year.

Only the Philippines reported a decline, with sales falling 4 percent to 5,508 units from 5,736, according to ARA.

Malaysia's national car Proton remained the market leader with a 22-percent market share in the four biggest markets in the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Japanese carmaker Toyota was second with 19 percent share, followed by another Malaysian firm Perodua with 12 percent, Mitsubishi at 11 percent, Isuzu, 10 percent, Nissan, 5 percent and Honda, 4 percent. *AFP*



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Grnlnd bnew 3br 2M 9487112

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REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

QUEZON CITY

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OFC. STAFF 7136116 JOSE

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Pasay City
ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY
Pursuant to Mandate of R.A. 7041
One (1) Legislative Staff Officer VI (Field Investigator) Item. No. 36-5/SG22-1 Qualification Standards: CS Professional; Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; 4 years relevant experience; 24 hours relevant training.

Fitness Instructress (F) Swimming Instructress(F) Baker (M) Domestic Helper(F) 5623962

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Ofc staff 91334470 Gerald

OFC STAFF 913-4470 ROSCO

SALES REP 18-30 7312208

URGENT NEED 18 OFC STAFF 4374639 START ASAP MS. LJ

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice is given that the estate of the late TEODORO Y. TOLENTINO, SR has been settled extrajudicially per Doc 345, Page 1, Book XIV, Series of 2002 of Notary Public El Cid C. Fajardo of Pasig City
(PDI-Mar. 14, 21 & 28, 2002)

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late DALMACIO PERNICIA was extrajudicially settled by their heir with sale per Doc. 344 Page 68 Book XXIX Notary Public Reynaldo Bernardo of Rizal
(PDI- Mar. 7, 14 & 21 2002)

Notice is given the estate of the late ALEJANDRO G. LINGAD has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc No. 170; Page No. 34; Book No. CXIV; Series 1991 before Notary Public Pedro L. Liangco of Bacolor Pampanga.
(PDI-March 7, 14 & 21, 2002)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late FELICISIMO DAYANAN and EPIFANIA DAYANAN has been extrajudicially settled among heirs as per Doc.97 Page 21 Book No. IV Series of 2002 before Notary Public J.T. PELICANO of Pasig City
PDI-March 21, 28 April 4, 2002

Please take notice that the estate of the late VIRGINIA MAY T. ALILING who died on Sept. 26, 2001 was extrajudicially settled by her heirs as per Doc 173, Page 61, Book X, Series of 2002 of Notary Public Jose P.O. Aliling IV of Makati City.
(PDI-March 21, 28 & April 4, 2002)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Lost S2 Lic.# 017667N99 Last Mar 15 at Rob. Mla.

Notice is given that DON MARIANO TRANS CORP. Plate Nos. PVG 393, 662, 398, 382 NYG 793, 833, 843, 823 PVV 852, 218, 228, 238, 248 PVV 258, 438, 278, 288 TVV 420, PWA 128, 148, 198 PWA 118, 178 TVX 986, 966 TVX 976, 545, 565, TVK 430 PWL 470, PWC 217, 237, 227 PWC 128 NXL 685, 989, 987 NXL 551 PWZ 142 PVY 142 PVF 852
KING OF KINGS TRANS CORP Plate Nos. PYK 713, 733, PYL 353, 343 PYL 313, 393, 303 PYG 755 PYG 835, 840, 830, 810, 780 PYG 815, 820 PYL 413 PYK 403 PYJ 737, 697 PYK 723 PYN 410, 426 PWR 117, 216, 226 PWN 241were lost.
(PDI-March 14, 21&28, 2002)

WANTED IMMEDIATELY
Soils and Materials
LABORATORY TECHNICIAN - 5
FIELD CIVIL ENGINEER - 1
Preferably knowledgeable in Compression, FDT, Coring.
Tel. Nos. 929-3352 to 65
Ask for Melody or Joseph

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

This is to notify the public that the S2-ID of Dr. Ma. Victoria A. Agustin with #17048N99 issued by the Dangerous Drugs Board got lost since December 2001. Any transaction dealing with the purchase of dangerous drugs using said ID number should not be honored.

PERSONAL

NOVENA PRAYER TO ST. JUDE
O, HOLY ST. JUDE apostle and martyr, great in virtue, rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful inter-cessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present, urgent petition (make your request). In return, I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Saint Jude, pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Pray this nine times a day for nine consecutive days. On the eighth day your prayers will be answered, for this prayer has never known to fail. Please don't forget to publish this once your wish is granted.

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movimondo

MOVIMONDO - Italy is implementing a project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) entitled: "Relief and Humanitarian Operations in Support of the Returnees, Displaced by the Insurgency in the Province of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur, Mindanao, the Philippines:"

PROJECT N°ECHO/PHL/210/2001/01001

INVITATION TO BID FOR

- Agricultural Inputs
- Agricultural Implements

TENDER DOCUMENTS

The tender dossier is available for collection at following mail address:

MOVIMONDO, P.O. Box # 13117
GSIS Post Office,
Carmen 9000 Cagayan de Oro City

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

April 19th, 2002 at 12:00 am. Any tender received after this deadline will not be considered.

TENDER OPENING SESSION

On April 26th, 2002 at 12:00 am at Movimondo Field Office, Poblacion, Bacolod, Lanao del Norte- 9205 Philippines Cell :0916-4399283 / 0917-7416322
E mail :moviphil@yahoo.it
From March 21, 2002.

For purpose of securing a copy of the bidding requirements, please write us at the address: MOVIMONDO Field Office, Poblacion, Bacolod, Lanao del Norte- 9205 Philippines; Email: moviphil@yahoo.it

(Sgd.) ENRICO CAMPIGLIA
Project Coordinator

(PDI - March 21, 28, Apr. 4 & 11, 2002)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Province of Cebu
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Cebu through the Prequalification Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC) invites qualified Contractors with "AAA" License, and registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as Large "B" for Buildings, and/or Joint Venture groups with same or more total capability to participate in the Public Bidding for the Construction of Cebu Farmers Market and South Bus Terminal Commercial Complex in N. Bacalso St., Cebu City.

Interested bidders are requested to submit a Letter of Intent and updated Pre-C to the Chairman, Prequalification Bids and Awards Committee, prior to the Issuance of the Plans and Bid Documents.

The Contract shall include the complete construction of the said five storey building with a total floor area of around 53,000 square meters.

Including the following items of work:

- Foundation works including bored piles
- Concrete Works
- Structural Excavation Works
- Civil Works
- Steel Works
- Architectural Works
- Electrical Works
- Pre-stressed Concrete
- Sanitary Works including WWTP

Implementation of the Contract Works is expected to commence in Early September 2002 and should be completed within 365 calendar days.

Minimum Equipment Requirement:

Equipment Type	Quantity	Availability
Bored Piling Equipment	2 units	owned or leased
Dump Trucks 5 cu.m. Cap.	4 units	owned
Back Hoe (crawler type) 0.5m³ Cap.	3 units	owned
Payloader	2 units	owned
Concrete Mixers (transit - 5-6 m³)	4 units	owned or leased
Concrete Batching Plant 60m³/hr.	1 unit	owned or leased
Concrete Pump	2 units	owned or leased
Tower Cranes, 5 tons	2 units	owned or leased
Mini Vibro Compactors, 1 ton	3 units	owned or leased
Hydraulic Telescopic Boom/Crane, 25-30 tons	2 units	owned or leased
Rammer 330x220 mm	2 units	owned or leased
Electric Generators	2 units	owned
Air Compressors	3 units	owned
Welding Machine 300 Amp	2 units	owned
Bar Cutter & Bender, 28mm Cap.	2 units	owned

Dates and Deadline for Submission of the following documents

	Dates	Time	Place
Submittal of Letter of Intent & Issuance of Pre-C	March 27 to April 3, 2002	8:00 - 5:00	PEO
Deadline of Submission of Pre-C documents	April 12, 2002	8:00 - 5:00	PEO
Issuance of Notice to Prequalified Contractor	May 10, 2002	8:00 - 5:00	PEO
Issuance of Plans & Bid Documents	May 27 & 28, 2002	8:00 - 5:00	PEO
Pre-bidding Conference	July 11, 2002	2:00 PM	PGO
Dropping of Bids	July 19, 2002	9:00 - 10:00 AM	PGO
Opening of Bids	July 19, 2002	10:30 AM	PGO

Set of Plans and related documents can be obtained from the Office of the Provincial Engineer upon Payment of a non-refundable amount of P35,000.00.

The Province of Cebu accepts Bid Securities/Performance Bond in the form of Cash, Managers Check and Bidder's Bond through GSIS only.

The Province of Cebu reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waives any defect contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) PABLO P. GARCIA
Governor
Chairman, PBAC
Province of Cebu

(PDI - March 14, 18 & 21, 2002)

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Members of the Board, Officers and Staff of
Kingpaoguat Typoco Tanyu Internationale (KTTI) Foundation
and
Asiaworld Internationale Group

announce with deep sorrow the passing away
of our beloved Founder

Philanthropist, Entrepreneur, Visionary

TAN YU

who died on 12 March 2002 at 4:45 a.m. in Houston, Texas at the age of 75.

His remains now lie in state in his family residence at 16 Guirayan Street corner Palansa Street, Santa Mesa Heights, Quezon City.

Nightly prayers shall be held at 8:00 p.m., culminating with a Necrological Service at 8:00 p.m. on 21 March 2002 (Thursday) in the residence.

On Friday, March 22, 2002 at 7:00 a.m., his remains will be brought to the Family Mausoleum at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City and upon arrival the Funeral Mass will be held.

"Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven"

DR. PANFILO CORNEJO CASTRO M.D.

of San Luis Batangas, Candelaria Quezon, and Quezon City

was called by his Creator on March 18, 2002 at the age of 94 after touching the lives of so many patients, students and friends with his kindness and compassion, honesty and humility.

His bereaved wife **Helen Welborn**; and children:

TOBOY & **Lita Boter** and children **Dave, Coco, Happy, Re-Anne, Sasha**
TONY & **Tess Florencio** and children **Grachel, Paolo, Jom, Niña**
MARYLEN & **Vic Mateo** and children **Monchet, Carlo** & **Christine Tan Uy, Marco**
grandchildren **Maricar** and **Tina**
PANFY & **Felly Golamco** and children **Leland, Allan, PJ, Jenna**
JESSELEN & **Oscar Verzosa** and children **Christine, Ginny, Camille**

Sisters-in-law **Magnolia W. Antonino** and **Winnie W. Luzon**; nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati.

Interment will be at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City on Saturday, March 23 after the Holy Mass at 8:00 AM.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
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DR. ARSENIO CORONEL MENDOZA

of Betis, Guagua, Pampanga and Quezon City

Past President, Philippine Society of Gastroenterology (1992-1994)

*peacefully joined his wife **MAXIMINA CULALA MENDOZA** in the Grace of our Lord on March 20, 2002 at the age of 76.*

His family, brothers and sisters

Fr. Francisco, O.P.
Rosario and **Manuel Lim**
Victor and **Consuelo Jose**
Teresita
Antonio and **Norma David**
Socorro
Santiago (†) and **Marietta Angeles**
Andrea
Nemenciana and **Marino Lai**
Reynaldo and **Erlinda Sarmiento**

nephews, nieces and their children request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City and will be brought to the family residence in Betis, Pampanga at 5:00 p.m. on March 21, 2002.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 23, 2002 at Betis Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. James Parish Church, Betis.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

2 Timothy 4:7

Last March 18, 2002 at 3:55 in the afternoon at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, the devoted husband, loving father and gallant hero

COL. BENJAMIN M. BAYHON, P.A. (Ret.)

went home to be with his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We, his children **Aline**, **Anthony** (deceased), **Mel**, **Bing**, **Brenda**, **Wayne** and **Irene**, together with his second family, **Juliet** and children, and other relatives and friends praise and thank the Lord for sharing **Papa Ben** with us for eighty-four long years. Thus, we rejoice in knowing that his soul is finally free and at rest with Him in heaven.

His body lies in state at the Camp Aguinaldo Evangelical Church in Quezon City.

Interment will take place on Saturday, March 23 at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio after the 12 nn service at the park.

Pa, we love you very much and we salute you. We will miss you greatly and thus look forward to the day when we can be together again in the Lord's presence.

Benedicto "DICK" T. Baltazar

Former Member, Rotary Club Rizal Centro Dist. 3800

November 6, 1953 - March 18, 2002

His loving wife **MALEN TUMANG**; children **MARGAUX**, **DINO** and **MYKEE**; parents **Atty. Castor M. Baltazar** (†) and **LEONORA TORRES**; parents-in-law **SOTERO TUMANG** (†) and **LIBRADA LACSON**; brothers **TONY**, **PEPING**, **CESAR** and **BENJIE**; sisters **PILAR BURGOS**, **MARTA RICARTE** and **CELIA CUNANAN**, brothers and sisters-in-law request the reader to pray for the eternal rest of his soul.

His body lies in state at the MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 24, 2002 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 8:00 o'clock a.m. Mass at Marian Chapel.

AUGUSTO LADERA JAVIER

of Laoag City and Quezon City

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 9, 2002
at the Denton Medical Center, Lewisville, Texas at the age of 69.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Chapel A, North Wing, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

The bereaved wife **Loida Espiritu Javier**; and children **Augusto Jonas**, **Myrna Patricia**, **Florentino Anthony**, **May Lourdes**, **Ramon**, **Jerome**, Thomas, Agnes & **Dominic**; daughters-in-law, sons-in-law and grandchildren request for your prayers.

Interment will be on the 24th of March 2002 (Sunday) at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Funeraria Paz.

EUGENIA PELLICER VIRI

(January 24, 1919 - March 19, 2002)

She is survived by her spouse **Angel T. Viri**; children **Manuel P. Peña**, **Francisco P. Viri** and **Concha** and **Victor Hontiveros** and grandchildren.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels (D) EDSA Guadalupe, Makati City.

Mass will be said at 11:00 am on March 22, 2002 at the Chapel D, following which will be the crematory service.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

ANASTO "Tatang Asto" TONGIO SANTOS

of Angeles City

Peacefully joined our Creator on March 19, 2002 at the age of 83.

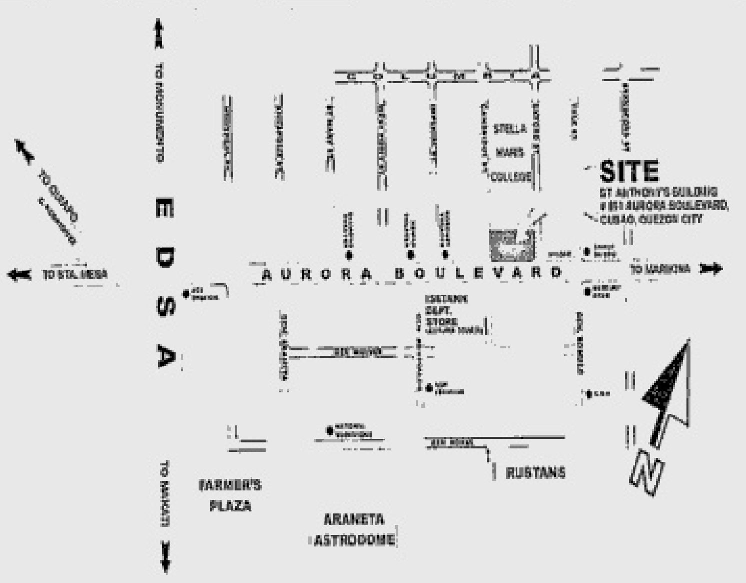
His beloved wife **Elang**; children **Charito** and **Dan Perico**, **Paulette** and **Gerry Tioleco**, **Mariecor** and **Bernie Go**, and **Jun**; brothers and sisters **Laling** (†), **Sis. Joaquina O.S.B.** (†), **Binay** (†), **Among Odon**, **Fely**, **Bek** (†), **Urdes**, **Gui** and **Remy**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Divine Mercy Chapel, Carmenville Subdivision, Angeles City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 24, 2002 at the Holy Mary Memorial Park after the 3:00 p.m. Mass.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

Aurora branch is now open to serve your Classified Ads requirements. For inquiries, please call **912-9008** to **11**.



CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Metro Manila 1103
Tel. Nos.: 372-5057 • 372-5043
Fax Nos.: 372-5048 • 372-5061

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY & TO BID

The Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR), invites all licensed Professional Electrical Engineers/Contractors to participate in the bidding for:

"The supply of materials and installation of the electrical connection and outlets including labor of NFRDI Office, Kayumanggi Building"

Interested bidders are invited to pre-qualify and to secure the bid documents together with the proposed plan from the Secretariat Committee on Bids, Property Section located at the Basement according to the following schedules:

Issuance of Pre-qual documents	**March 26, 2002**
Submission of Pre-qual requirements	**April 02, 2002**
Pre-bidding Conference	**April 10, 2002 - 10:00 AM**
Start of Issuance of Bid Documents to pre-qualified bidders	**April 11-12, 2002**
Bidding Conference (Submission and opening of Bids)	**April 16, 2002**

Interested bidders are required to submit the following requirements upon securing bidding forms; photo copies of Business License, Certificate of Registration/DTI, latest audited Financial Statement, latest Income Tax Return (original copies to be shown for authentication purposes).

This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by the PBAC is the most advantageous to the government. The PBAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, or does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director

(PDI - March 21, 2002)

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

Date : March 19, 2002
Loan No. 1
Contract No. 1

1. The Government of the Philippines through the Development of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has received a loan from the Asia Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for Rural Infrastructure Component for which this Invitation to Pre-Qualify and to Bid is issued.
2. The Municipality of Lambayong as implementing partner of the DAR for ARCP, intends to pre-qualify contractors and if pre-qualified, to bid for the rehabilitation and completion of Pidtiguian-Pimbalayan to New Cebu Farm to Market Road.

Minimum Equipment Required:

1 unit Prime Mover - Leased/Owned
1 unit Bulldozer - Owned
1 unit Road Grader - Leased/Owned
5 units Dump Truck - Owned
5 units Dump Truck - Leased
1 unit Road Roller - Leased/Owned
1 unit Concrete Mixer (1 bagger) - Owned
1 unit Water Truck - Leased/Owned

3. Pre-qualification forms (Pre-C) and bidding documents, may be purchased by interested eligible bidders at the Municipal Engineering Office and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos Only (P2,000.00) for each set beginning April 3, 2002.
4. Submission of application for pre-qualification must be received in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Chairman, PBAC-ARCP, Municipality of Lambayong** not later than **May 3, 2002**.
5. The submission and opening of bids will be on **10:00 AM of May 3, 2002**. No bids will be accepted later than **10:00 AM of May 3, 2002**. Prior to the bidding, a pre-bid Conference will be held at 2:00 PM on April 19, 2002 at the Municipal Hall, Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat. The bids shall be valid for a period of 120 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a bid security of **Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos Only P350,000.00)** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency.
6. The PBAC-ARCP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligations whatsoever to compensate or indemnify to the bidder for any expense or loss that they may incur in the preparation of bid and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **HON. RAMON M. ABALOS**
Chairman, PBAC-ARCP

(PDI--Mar. 21 & 28, 2002)

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INQUIRER TRIVIA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

No way out

Q. What's the world's most secure prison?

A. The prison on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, California, owned the distinction until it was closed in 1963. After it became a maximum security federal prison in 1934, no convict was known to have lived to tell a successful escape from it. A total of 23 men attempted it, but twelve were captured, five were shot dead, one drowned, and five were presumed drowned. In December 16, 1962, one man reached the mainland alive, only to be captured on the spot.

For the Record. The longest prison sentences on record were those meted out to Chamoy Thipyaso, a Thai woman known as the queen of underground investing, and seven of her associated. Each was sentenced to serve 141, 078 years in jail by the Bangkok Criminal Court, on July 27, 1989, for swindling the public through a multimillion-dollar deposit-taking racket.

Ooops! One of the unluckiest accused persons of all time was Paul Hubert, of Bordeaux, France. In 1863 Hubert was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. After he had served 21 years in solitary confinement, his case was reopened — and only then was it discovered that he had been convicted of murdering himself.

Past Forward. This day in 1965: Soviet cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov became the first man to walk in space as he danced and somersaulted in orbit hundreds of miles above the Earth, secured only by a slender lifeline. As co-pilot of the *Voskhod II* spacecraft, the 31-year-old Leonov left the craft to take the first hand-held images of the Earth during his 15-minute adventure.

WORD WATCH

Somersault (sum ehr solt) : ultimately, from the Latin *supra* ("over") + *saltus* ("a leap").

PDI – March 21, 2002

MOTORING

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Ford Phils goes Asean

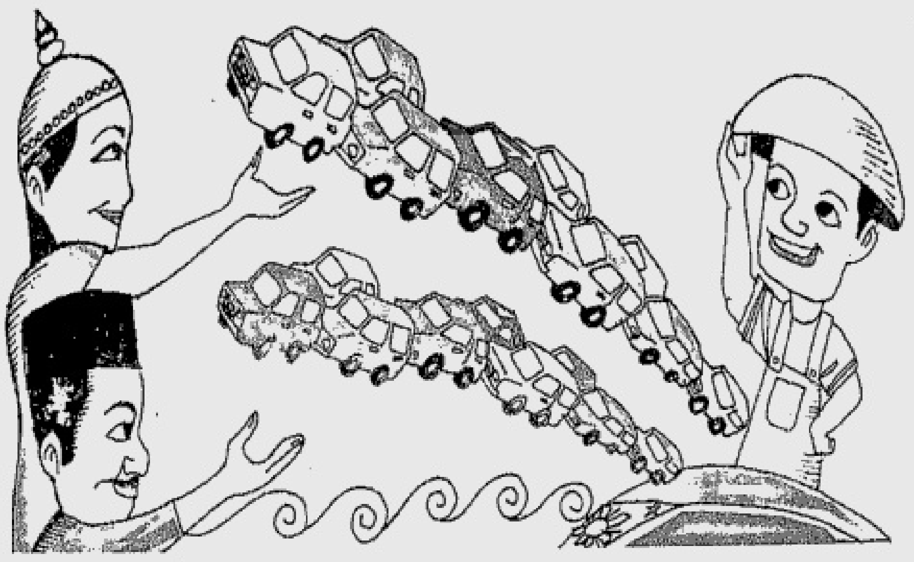
Vehicles to be exported to Thailand, Indonesia

By Tessa R. Salazar

STA. ROSA, Laguna—Ford Motor Co. Philippines Inc. becomes the first automotive company in the Philippines to be a volume exporter of built-up vehicles.

This was stressed by Ford Group Philippines president Terry J. Emrick as the company unveiled its vehicle export program March 19 and paved the way in the export of CBU vehicles to Thailand and Indonesia. Its P4-billion, 30,000-sq-m manufacturing plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, will be home to 74,005 vehicles manufactured within the next five years for local and export markets.

Among the vehicles to be manufactured from 2002 to 2006 are the C206/L3 Ford Lynx/Laser; J39 Mazda Protégé; the U204 Ford Escape and the J14 Mazda Tribute.



Export volumes

From 2002 to 2006, export volumes for Thailand would comprise 38,104 units and for Indonesia, 54,051 units.

"We are already hitting the ground running this year by manufacturing 5,476 units to be shipped and marketed in Thailand. For Indonesia, the export volume will be 1,196 vehicle units," Emrick said.

The CBU vehicle export program of the FMCPI was based on the signing of a memorandum of agreement in Washington last Nov. 20 between Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II and Ford Motor Co. vice chair Wayne Booker.

The program's projected export starting in 2004 is more than 70 percent of total production, which qualified the FMCPI as an export enterprise. In data obtained by the INQUIRER, the program is said to be the first major export of CBU vehicles from the Philippines.

Export volumes of the manufacturing plant are expected to increase as the year progresses.

Large-scale manufacture

The plant's specialization, said Emrick, would also lead to large-scale manufacturing that would contribute to the growth and development of automotive parts suppliers.

The FMCPI is also said to be exporting not just vehicles but local components that may include starters, windshields and seat fabrics.

Emrick foresees the vehicle export program to strengthen relationships with the government and strengthen the Asean free trade. It is also reportedly set to increase intra-Asean trade by over $1.2 billion over the next five years.

Automobiles and acronyms

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

TWO young car buffs, having nothing better to do after the school year ended, organized a contest involving automobiles and acronyms.

Using their cell phones, they texted their friends to come up with phrases to describe or define a car make, for example "Virtually Worthless" for VW (Volkswagen). In other words, spell out the meaning of a make of car as if it were an acronym. The contestant who texted back the most phrases for a car make within 20 minutes would be declared the winner.

After some frenzied texting, A, who produced eight phrases for Ford, was declared the winner. B, who conceptualized four for BMW, was the runner-up.

Here are A's entries: FORD = "First On Recall Day": "First On Rust and Deterioration"; "Fix Or Repair Daily"; "Found On Road, Dead"; "Fault Of Research and Development"; "Fast Only Rolling Downhill"; "Features O.J. & Ron's DNA"; (backward) "Driver Returns On Foot."

B texted the following for BMW: "Beautiful Mechanical Wonder"; "Big Money Works"; "Bought My Wife"; "Brutal Money Waster."

FIAT got three entries from a classmate: "Failure in Italian Technology"; "Fix It All the Time"; "Fix It Again, Tony!"

Audi, Chevrolet, Dodge, GMC, Honda, Oldsmobile and Saab got two entries each as follows:

AUDI = "Accelerates Under Demonic Influence"; "Always Unsafe Designs Implemented."

CHEVROLET = "Can Hear Every Valve Rap On Long Extended Trips"; "Cheap, Hardly Efficient, Virtually Runs On Luck Every Time."

DODGE = "Darn Old Dirty Gas Eater"; "Drips Oil, Drops Grease Everywhere."

GMC = "Garage Man's Companion"; "Got a Mechanic Coming?"

HONDA = "Had One, Never Did Again"; "Happy Owners Never Drive Anything Else."

OLDSMOBILE = "Old Ladies Driving Slowly Make Others Behind Infuriatingly Late Everyday"; "Overpriced, Leisurely Driven Sedan Made Of Buick's Irregular Leftover Equipment."

SAAB = "Send Another Automobile Back"; "Swedish Automobiles Always Break Down."

The single entries were:

BUICK = "Big Ugly Indestructible Car Killer"

GM = "General Maintenance"

HYUNDAI = "Hope You Understand Nothing's Dear And Inexpensive"

MAZDA = "Most Always Zipping Dangerously Along"

TOYOTA = "Too Often Yankees Overprice This Auto"

VOLVO = "Very Odd Looking Vehicular Object"

I've come up with my own acronym: A.I.T.S.O.F. = "All In The Spirit Of Fun."

AUTOMOBILES/B11

TIRE MONITORING SYSTEM

Latest Pajero setting trend

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines is bringing into the country the latest technology in tire pressure monitoring system, which is fast becoming a trend in the United States.

Installed on the 2002 Pajero as an original equipment, the system is a unique new device for monitoring tire pressure as well as temperature. This latest move is being carried out to prevent accidents brought by neglect in monitoring the vehicle's tire condition.

An equipment under the active-safety category (i.e. airbags and ABS), this technology is being introduced in the market for the first time in the Pajero. This tire pressure monitor system allows the driver to check, through a digital display, the pressure and temperature of the vehicle's tires anytime and enables him to react accordingly.

Sensors

This is made possible by a sensor installed on all four tires including the spare tire. These sensors detect the condition of each tire and warn the driver when a tire falls below or above the standard pressure and temperature settings.

In case of abnormalities in any of the tires, the display device buzzer provides warning to the driver. If the pressure is either too high or too low, the light-emitting diode (LED) of the abnormal tire will turn red and quickly flash for five seconds, while showing the pressure value and a buzzer going off every two minutes until the abnormal state is disengaged.

Because the driver is being made aware of this abnormal tire condition, the driver can attend to the problem at once and can maintain control and continue driving to a safe stopping point without damaging the wheel.

Other benefits

The tire pressure monitor system has also other benefits, including providing better handling and ride, as well as improved gas mileage and longer-lasting tires. Studies show that driving 7 lb below acceptable levels will decrease a tire's life span 15-30 percent. An underinflated tire also has more rolling resistance, which in turn requires more energy to power and therefore increases fuel consumption.

The 2002 Pajero, equipped with this state-of-the-art tire pressure monitoring technology, is now available in all Mitsubishi dealers nationwide. It also comes with white-beam protector type fog lamps, more comfortable and supportive split-type second-row leather seats, 16" aluminum wheels with 265/70 all-terrain tires, MMAD single in-dash CD-MP3 player with DSP, equalizer coupled with a 6-speaker system, a spare tire carrier with cover and molded floor mats.

With the Grand Vitara Exclusive Features
Peace of mind with a lot of driving fun and comfort.

GRAND VITARA
FULL FRAME 4x4
DRIVE SELECT 4x4

Now, as low as P152,000 downpayment on the Grand Vitara 2.0 M/T!
OR
Save P75,000 for cash buyers!

Or a Low 20% DP for 0% Interest / 12 months Plan

Plus, FREE! Hard Tire Case, Fog Lamps and Muffler Extension on Grand Vitara models!

Promo valid up to March 31, 2002. See your nearest Suzuki dealer for details

Exclusive Safety Features

Crumple zones in ladder box frame

Side impact beams

Zero Interest / 25% DP / 12 mos. on Grand Vitara 2.5 M/T
Easy Financing Package also available on Vitara 1.6 models
Financing Plans subject to BPI Family Bank approval
Rates for other banks may vary

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Also available, the Vitara 1.6

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0365 Series of 2002

BMW 3 SERIES
PGA Cars will bring the new BMW 3 series at the South Wing (near Page One) of the Power Plant Mall in Rockwell from April 5 to 7. PGA is giving everyone a chance to appreciate the innovative changes it underwent as well as its Valvetronic technology. It will also show interested and future BMW owners how they can avail of a special financing plan designed to make it easier to own a new BMW 3 series.

Toyota leads vehicle sales

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. continues to lead the automotive industry sales for the year by registering the highest sales output for the month of February with a total of 1,782 vehicles sold, based on the latest sales figures reported to the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers Inc. (Campi).

Bolstered by the success of its customer financing promo, Toyota reported brisk sales of its passenger car and commercial vehicle models, particularly the Corolla Altis and the Tamaraw FX Revo that both topped the sales in their respective category.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines on the other hand, had the second highest sales last month with total sales of 1,317 units while Isuzu Philippines Corp. registered the third highest output with its reported sales of 754 units.

Year-to-date figures also show Toyota leading the way in total industry sales. For the first two months of the year, Toyota reported sales of 3,391 units, a slight 5 percent increase compared to the same period last year. Mitsubishi Motors' output for the year has reached 2,461 units which is good for second place while Honda Cars has so far sold a total of 1,522 units for the year.

Looking on the per segment performance based on Campi figures, Toyota led the way in the passenger car (PC) segment with total sales of 614 units for the month of February. Toyota's resurgence in the passenger car segment is largely attributed to the strong performance of the Corolla Altis, which experienced a 65-percent growth compared to year ago levels.

In close second in the PC segment is Honda, which tallied a total of 603 units sold. Rounding out the top three is Nissan Motor Phil. Inc. with 124 units sold, indicating a 52-percent decline compared to the same period last year despite a new model introduction in June last year.

Sepang secret amid Toyota F1's rookie jitters

FULL TANK
Al Mendoza

FORMULA 1 is all about man and machine. That became evident once more during last Sunday's Malaysian Grand Prix in Kuala Lumpur.

Ralf Schumacher of Germany won with a BMW WilliamsF1. Juan Pablo Montoya of Colombia finished second with a BMW WilliamsF1.

That 1-2 finish was proof once more of the truism that putting a good driver behind the wheel of an excellent car can produce victories, if not decent finishes.

* * *

For BMW WilliamsF1, Sunday's victory gave away a secret at the state-of-the-art Sepang Circuit: The $80-million speedway became the launching pad for BMW's drivers to topple Michael Schumacher's myth of invincibility.

The victory was BMW's 108th in 447 races. Scuderia Ferrari Marlboro, Schumacher's team, is the winningest with 145 in 655 runs, followed by West McLaren Mercedes with 134 in 528 starts.

It's been Ferrari, Mercedes and BMW for years now and their 1-2-3 ranking in Grand Prix victories is the result of a combination of good drivers and good cars.

But this is not to say, though, that the rest of the field—from the fourth placer to the last finisher in the 11-car cast—have employed bad drivers to drive bad cars.

* * *

The other teams—Jaguar Racing, Mild Seven Renault, Orange Arrows Cosworth, KL Minardi Asiatech, Lucky Strike BAR Honda, Sauber Petronas, DHL Jordan Honda and Panasonic Toyota Racing—must never be looked down or you don't know your Formula 1.

The Formula 1 is the pinnacle of success in motor sports. Just by being there is already a badge of honor. It's Mt. Olympus, the Olympics, of all car racing. Nobody gets to drive there at a day's notice. No car can race there with a mere flick of a finger.

It's all precision there, all science.

* * *

In Formula 1, one driver's mistake can damage everything. One car-part malfunction can instantly spell defeat. One team's oversight can ruin a driver's dream (as in Allan McNish's case).

With three Formula 1 trips to Sepang tucked under my belt since F1's 1999 inaugural in Kuala Lumpur (thanks to Caltex, Honda and Toyota), I can honestly say I've never seen so tough a car race like the Formula 1.

I've seen the CART races at the Michigan Speedway in Detroit in the company of, among others, Arnel Doria just a while back. I've covered the World Karting Championship and several international races during the time of Pocholo Ramirez, Freddie Masigan, Dante Silverio and the late Joey Bundalian, among others.

But nothing compares with Formula 1.

* * *

Last Sunday's Malaysian Grand Prix is an example.

Ralf Schumacher, the 26-year-old brother of Michael Schumacher, won the race in style. He beat his teammate, the 26-year-old Montoya, by 39.7 seconds. Michael, the 32-year-old defending champion, came in third 61.795 behind.

If this were basketball, Ralf's 39.7-margin over Montoya would be the equivalent of a rout. If this were boxing, that would amount to a fifth-round knockout win for Ralf.

* * *

But while the 1-2 finish of Ralf and Pablo on board their BMWs on Sunday was brilliant enough, how would you explain the fact that Ferrari's Michael Schumacher still clinched third after falling to 21st and last early in the 56-lap race?

Mike has become the epitome of a brilliant driver paired with an excellent Ferrari car that is why he has won the last two F1 races. A third victory this year will allow him to equal Argentine Juan Miguel Fangio's all-time record of five world titles; Schumi's first two crowns came in 1994 and 1995 on board a Benetton.

Not to remove the luster away from Schumacher's recent feat but for the record, fourth finisher Jenson Button (Renault) surrendered third to Schumi after suffering a mechanical problem in the last lap. Fifth was Nick Heidfeld (Sauber-Petronas) and sixth was Filip Massa (Sauber-Petronas).

* * *

As in every Formula 1 race, drama was written all over Sepang Sunday.

Allan McNish of Toyota was a graphic case of how a crew succumbed to pressure to spoil a driver's party. Briton McNish missed entering the Magic 6 after a misunderstanding with his crew and came out a sorry seventh in the 22-man field.

The sixth placer in every stop of this season's 17 legs gets 1 point. The winner earns 10, runner-up 6, third placer 4, fourth placer 3 and fifth placer 2.

McNish's spare tires weren't ready when he made a pit stop, just seconds after his more illustrious Toyota teammate Mika Salo had checked in for electrical repairs. McNish was then battling for fifth to sixth spots when he made the visit; the crew panicked and he got stuck there for nearly 39 seconds, costing him entry into the points leaderboard.

More of a case of rookie jitters than anything?

"Your guess is as good as mine," said Danny Isla, a senior VP of Toyota Motor Philippines, who was with 30 or so Toyota dealers in Sepang who included Tata J. Villanueva, Alexander Ty, Severino C. Lim, Henry T. Sy, Rolly Malig, Tay Sornet and Peter U. Lim Lo Suy.

Toyota is only into its first Formula 1.

Said TMP's Raymond Rodriguez: "It would have been another productive F1 week for Toyota if McNish made it to the Magic 6 after Mika Salo's 1-point finish in Melbourne."

Well said, Raymond.

* * *

Starex owners, rejoice. Your fears are over.

Hyndai Motor Co. has appointed Hari (Hyundai Asia Resources Inc.) the exclusive distributor of Hyundai passenger cars and other light commercial vehicles.

Not only that.

Hari has been assigned to put up service centers all over the country.

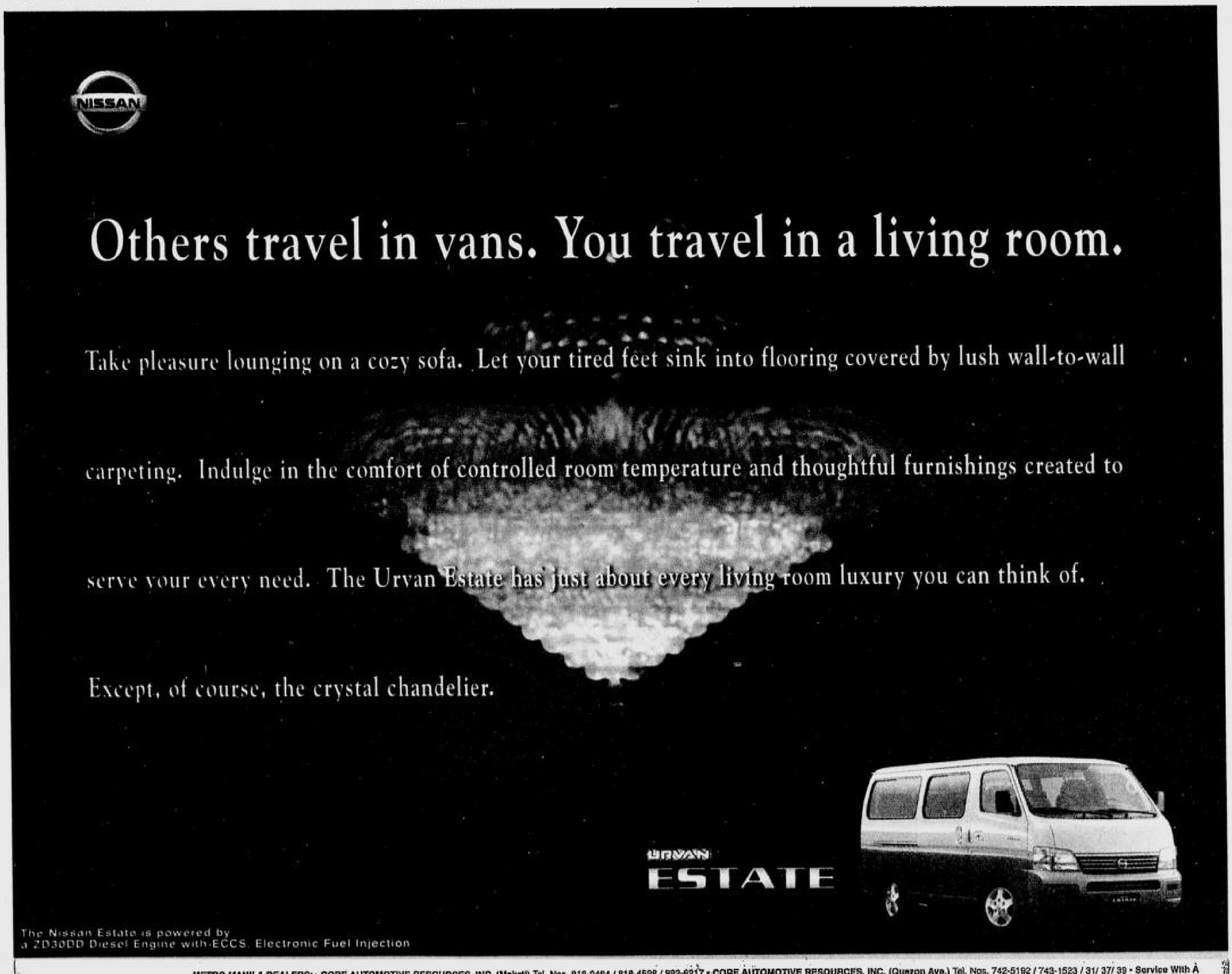
Already in place is the National Technical Training Center, which will train personnel to diagnose, repair and keep roadworthy all Hyundai vehicles in the archipelago. The Metro Manila dealership has been established on E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City. Those outside Manila are located in San Fernando, Pampanga, Cebu City and Bacolod. To open shortly are dealerships in Makati, Ortigas and Davao City.

Thus, the phenom that is Starex is predicted to continue rising beyond unimaginable proportions.

Cheers!

* * *

QUOTE ME. To overtake is human, to allow one to overtake is divine.



NISSAN

Others travel in vans. You travel in a living room.

Take pleasure lounging on a cozy sofa. Let your tired feet sink into flooring covered by lush wall-to-wall carpeting. Indulge in the comfort of controlled room temperature and thoughtful furnishings created to serve your every need. The Urvan Estate has just about every living room luxury you can think of.

Except, of course, the crystal chandelier.

URVAN ESTATE

The Nissan Estate is powered by
a ZD30DD Diesel Engine with ECCS Electronic Fuel Injection

NISSAN
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LYNX FOR EXPORT

Spruced-up 'wildcat' prowls in, leaps out

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE 2002 FORD Lynx

UP FRONT, this looks like the "strongest Lynx."

This is because the new Lynx, built at the Ford Motor Co. Philippines Santa Rosa plant, will be exported to neighboring countries such as Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam to support the FMCP's business.

The Lynx claws it out locally with other powerful sedans such as Toyota's Altis, Honda's Civic, Mitsubishi's Lancer and Nissan's Sentra Grandeur. The Lynx, however, is home bred, and will soon be introduced in Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Fashion sense

Ford decided to bring more fashion sense to the Lynx, which had been previously acknowledged for its engine and suspension but criticized for its ho-hum exterior. Stunning good looks—well, the lack of it—was mainly blamed for the old Lynx not capturing a big chunk of the sedan market. It may have been also this factor that this car earned the reputation of being seriously underrated.

The Lynx 2002 now sports what it calls a modern progressive design that includes a chrome grille on its nose, quad projector halogen headlamps, clear fog lamps, a power moon roof and a parking sensor. Its appearance is likewise enhanced by side skirts, chrome inserts in body side molding, clear side repeater lamp and 15" aluminum wheels.

Too European

It has all-chrome rear garnish, exhaust finisher and bumper inserts and combination tail lamps. The Lynx carries the GSI and the high-end "Ghia" badge from the Ghia Design, acknowledged automotive design house based in Turin, Italy. Too European, some say, but Turin is said to be as important to automotive design as Paris is to apparel.

The Triple H body structure means a rigid inner safety cage that toughens the roof, bodyside and floor. Dual SRS airbags cushion passengers from collision. The new Lynx promises to possess a wildcat's cunning motility. The "crisp, responsive" acceleration of its 1.6-liter DOHC four-cylinder 16-V engine produces 118 ps at 5,500 rpm.

Fuel-saving mechanism

The new Lynx has a 5-speed manual or a 4-speed EC automatic transmission. Its slope control technology is convenient for shifting gears. Its moves are calculated and energy saving, thanks to a mechanism that helps save fuel, called the distributor-less ignition system.

Its stability on rough terrain is enforced with the MacPherson strut front suspension and a fully independent rear suspension. Ford announced its introductory price at P660,000 for the 1.6-liter Gsi manual transmission and P695,000 for the Gsi automatic variant. The 1.6 Ghia model, meanwhile, starts at P727,000 while its manual transmission with leather seats and moonroof is priced at P765,000 and the AT variant at P798,000.

FUEGO
Created to conquer

Isuzu Fuego: A hit on and off the road

ISUZU Philippines Corp. will join the 33rd Street Production on March 20-24 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Activity Center of Alabang Town Center. Isuzu's latest Fuego Sport 4 x 4 will be the showcase to watch out for.

The exhibit, called "Rough & Tough: The Off-Road Show," will feature the latest off-road vehicles. The event will be highlighted with activities like indoor rock wall climbing, fashion show of outdoor apparel, outdoor accessories, camping gear and adventure travel.

Known to conquer the roughest and toughest road, the new Fuego Sport 4 x 4 boasts of a lift-up body, making it taller with a ground clearance of 255 mm. It rolls off with a sturdy 245/R16 tire size for stability and very stylish 8JJx16" aero magwheels that take any nasty road condition in stride. Despite the rugged appeal, passengers will be pampered with the Fuego Sport's two-tone all-leather interior. Fired by the powerful 2.8-liter direct injection turbo-charged diesel engine, the Fuego Sport 4 x 4 is born to conquer any off-road challenge.

For indoor rock wall climbers, Isuzu will sponsor the final day competition which is slated on March 24. This is open to all amateur and professional rock climbers who will register before and during the event. Each climbing contestant will be timed and the first three fastest climbers to reach the top will receive valuable prizes from Isuzu.

Also to be displayed are other members of Isuzu's Rough & Tough clan—the recently launched Crosswind XUV as well as Isuzu's new Ignite Accessories. With this lineup, the show is simply a must-see for all off-road enthusiasts.

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Sinski enters local market

SINSKI XSJ125T-11

SINSKI, a new player in the local motorcycle industry, is determined to penetrate the local market with an assurance not just of comparative affordability but also of international quality that is deemed to set a new trend in the domestic motorcycle industry.

Sinski products' sole distributor in the country is Sinski Motorcycle Philippines Inc. It has just forged a 60-40 partnership deal with China-based manufacturer Jiangsu Sinski Motorcycle Co. Ltd. It will be offering a complete line of motorcycles ranging from scooters, tricycles and mopeds to big bikes powered by 50cc to 150cc (2-stroke or 4-stroke items).

Jiangsu Sinski has been in the motorcycle trade in China for 12 years, with an estimated production of 500,000 units a year. It has earned the distinction of being included in the top 10 manufacturing firms and holds the ISO/FDIS9001:2000 Quality System certification. It has been exported to the United States, Europe, Japan and other Asian countries for more than five years now.

Leading the trend

Said Anthony Chua, president of Sinski Motorcycle Philippines: "This is the first time Sinski is introduced in the Philippines. We are confident that Sinski will be an embodiment of quality and affordability—a cut above other Chinese brands. Our company wants to change the image of Chinese motorcycles. Our vision is also to help each Filipino family to have a good-quality motorcycle that they can afford." He added, "We are definitely geared toward leading the trend of the new century, which is after all Sinski's formula."

Chua said the general perception today is that Chinese motorcycles are cheap but unreliable. He stressed that Sinki is determined to change this perception which resulted from gray market imports from China sold locally with neither service technology nor parts inventory available. All Sinski products, he said, are assured of the 3Qs—Quality Motorcycles, Quality Parts and Quality After-Sales Service.

Chua said Sinski motorcycles will be backed by an after-sales support team, spare parts supply and after-sales services as part of the company's program. It will be working closely with local dealers to ensure both dealers and consumers are getting the best service from the brand.

Bringing down costs

Sinski bikes are almost 50 percent lower than current leading brands, while providing the same technical expertise and good performance and likewise offering new modish designs. The company has managed to bring down costs through prudent decisions in manufacturing and unique innovations in marketing. It has also imbibed, after all, Japanese technology, said Chua.

Sinski Motorcycle Philippines has been operating for just about three months, but has already gained market confidence of acceptability from end-users in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

More showrooms and service centers will be put up in several strategic locations nationwide. Sinski is now in the process of facilitating documents for BOI approval and would like to participate in the motorcycle program of the government.

BASF sponsors Trans Sport Show

THE TRANS Sport Show 2002, slated April 6-14 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City, will have BASF Coatings Inc. as its gold sponsor.

BASF will showcase its world-renowned R-M Diamont 2K automotive refinishing paints during the nine-day event. R-M paints are unquestionably of the highest performance solution for base and clear colors, whether solid, metallic or pearl. Through its outstanding success, Diamont is accepted as the industry standard and proves that a refinish paint line can be economical, efficient and easy to use.

R-M paints do not require special application techniques throughout the entire painting process. Likewise, its exceptional covering power proves that finish quality can be achieved with the efficient use of material.

BASF Philippines Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of BASF Germany. It provides the country's leading manufacturing firms approximately 8,000 commercial products that BASF produces worldwide. BASF Coatings Inc. is one of the largest suppliers of automotive coatings in the world.

In the Philippines, the company also is a major supplier of OEM automobile coatings servicing the local car assemblers. It also supplies Industrial coatings focusing on motorcycles and aluminum wheel coatings and coil coatings.

Organized by TradeShow International Inc., the Trans Sport Show has always been a favorite venue of companies in the automotive industry for promoting their products or services to the public. Corporate exhibitors get better exposure mileage for every peso spent and the immediate feedback they receive from show visitors on the acceptability of their product is vital to their overall marketing thrust.

The show's theme this year is all about "Auto Design Evolution" with featured marque, Porsche, displaying several variants of the legendary Porsche 356 model.

Automobiles...

From page B9

XEROX YOUR LICENSE. Tired of surrendering your driver's license to the security guard every time you enter a gated village?

Automobile Association Philippines executive director Johnny Angeles has an excellent idea: photocopy your license and use this to gain entry to gated villages. This way, even if the security guards misplace or lose the photocopy, you still have your license and can have it photocopied again.

A color photocopy the size of a Philippine driver's license costs only P45. Laminating it will cost you only P10. The sum total is P55, which is a pittance compared to the hassle of losing your license and going back to the Land Transportation Office to apply for another one.

If the guard at the gate won't accept the photocopy, point out to him that it has your I.D. photo and carries all the information they need for security purposes: your full name, address, date of birth and driver's license number.

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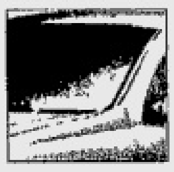

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Foie gras and savory soufflé come to Baguio

STORY ON PAGE C2

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April 02 AM How to make Ho Fen, Stir Fried Beef with Ho Fen, Ho Fen with Spare Ribs in Beans Sauce, Fried "Kuey Tiew"
April 04 PM Kikiam, Chicken & Prawns on Hot Salad, Sago Cream Pudding
April 05 PM Siao Long Pao, Fried Man Tho, Peanut Butter Rolled in Buns
April 06 AM Wanton, Suey Kao, Taro Rainbow Cake
April 10 AM 4 Vegetarian Dishes
April 13 AM Cantonese Style "Ma-Chang", Pig's Blood with Kuchay, Bean Curd Steamed with Minced Pork & Szechuan Vegetable
April 19 Am How to make Cheung Fen, Minced Beef Cheung Fen, Shrimps Cheung Fen, Asado Cheung Fen
April 20 Am Tikoy, Radish Cake, Squash Cake

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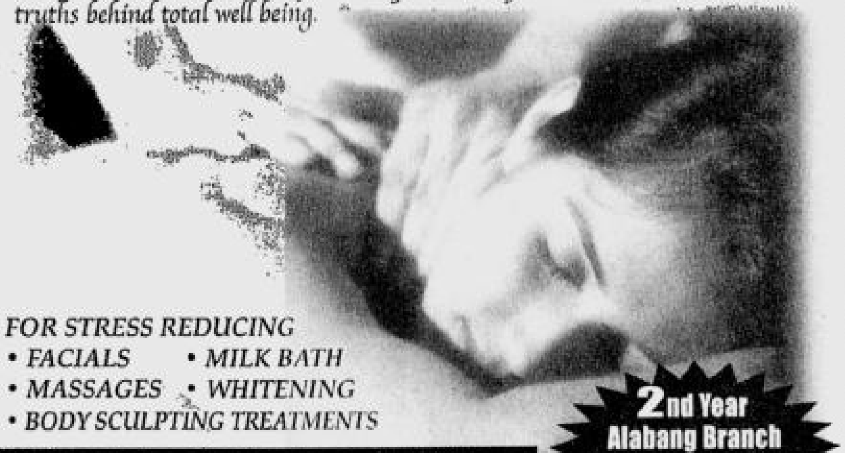

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Foie gras and savory soufflé come to Baguio

By Marge C. Enriquez
Photos by Chito Vecina

With its trademark cozy ambience, well-traveled executive chef and changing artworks on the wall, Le Soufflé has invaded the City of Pines

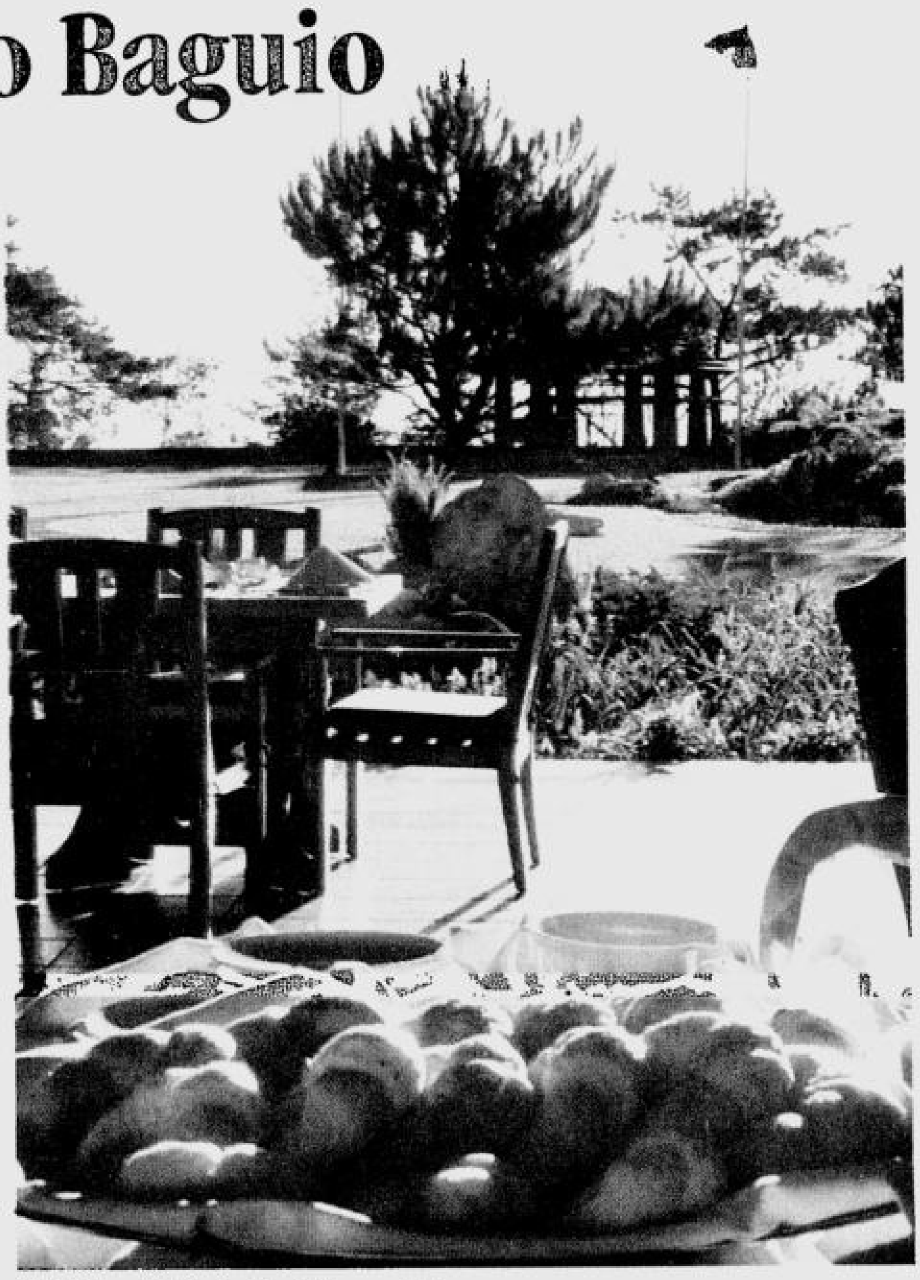
WITH THE OPENING of Le Soufflé at The Manor Hotel in Camp John Hay, diners in Baguio have more options. It is the only restaurant in City of Pines that offers foie gras and savory soufflé.

"Le Soufflé cooks. Others just heat food," remarks Heiner Maulbecker, general manager of Camp John Hay Golf Club. Club Leisure Corp. runs the golf club and the new Manor Hotel in this former American reserve.

"It takes about a couple of years to put up a good food and beverage team—if you're lucky," says Maulbecker. "If you get the wrong guys, then after three or four months you have to change the chef or maitre d'. We asked Le Soufflé to run the restaurant for us. It has a good following in Manila. Although the prices are not five-star, the food and service are in the upper bracket. It has been very consistent in food and service. We needed somebody who could jump in the driver's seat, shift gears and off you go." Club Leisure Corp. hopes that Le Soufflé would also draw visitors to Camp John Hay.

Classic cuisine

Le Soufflé at The Manor upgrades the standards by bringing its classic recipes that are prepared with fresh stock, subtle sauces and garnishes. The restaurant has been known for elegant creations served in a casual ambience at prices below the five-star hotel standards. Both the catering and the restaurant services are known for the careful menu planning that guarantees a felicitous blend of flavors, colors and textures, served in simple but choice chinaware and pristine napery. In a city where restaurants use a lot of processed mixtures, the hallmark of its cuisine are the delicate sauces that cap the flavor of a dish. Everything is prepared and served at exactly the right temperature.



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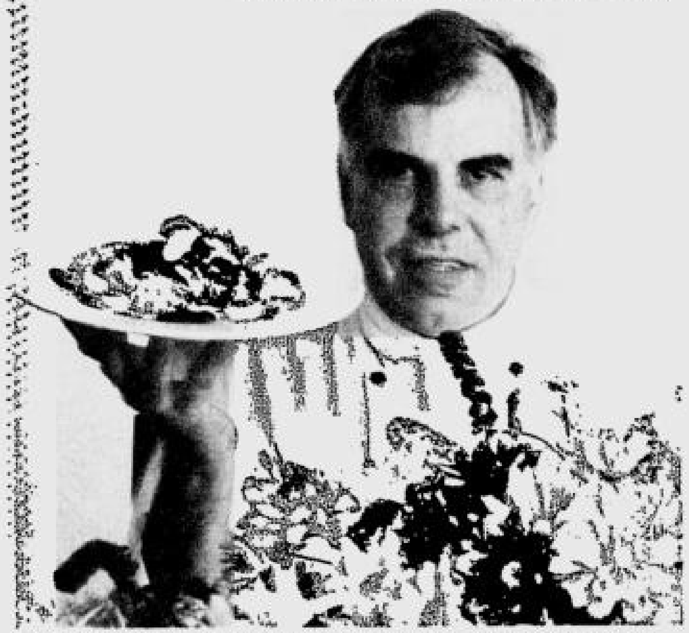


CHEF Michael Phillips with his plate of salad of smoked salmon with prawns and shiitake mushroom

The menu consists of Le Soufflé's classics. The delicacy of the fish courses—Blue Marlin Millefeuille (P395+), the tender and moist Grilled Salmon fillet with a creamy white wine sauce (P495+), Roasted Lapu-Lapu (P450+) and Sea Bass (P350+) contrast the pronounced courses of the meats—Medallions of Pork, (P350+), Rack of Lamb (P650+), Sautéed Black Angus Tenderloin (P650+), Breaded Chicken Scallop (P350+).

The Grilled Rosemary Scented Lamb Chops (P650+) exemplifies the sensuous appeal of the classic cuisine—to the eye, the nose and the palate. Garnished with marble potatoes, the meat is served in a rich Parma Ham Red Wine Shallot Sauce with herbs wafting in the air. The most classic is the Roast Duck with Orange Sauce (P350+), which is tender on the inside and crispy on the outside, with caramel and orange juice to lend tartness. The duck is festooned with gratin potatoes and ratatouille.

The serving portion is modest, with more available as it is desired. Every dish is faultlessly served to do justice to the cooking.

The soups are also distinct for their preparation. The stock is made from cubes of meat and simmered slowly in water with finely cut vegetables and herbs to intensify the flavors.

Patrons can also enjoy Le Soufflé favorites, such as the Mushroom in Filo Pastry (P160+), Smoked Salmon and Roasted Prawn Salad (P240+) and Vegetable and Mushroom Risotto (P280+). For dessert, where else in the City of Pines can you get soufflés in banana caramel, chocolate, mango and orange grande marnier (P120+ to P150+)? The list also maintains Le Soufflé favorites, such as the Chocolate Decadence (P100+) and the Crème Brulée (P100+) topped with a swirl of whipped cream and strawberry.

HEINER Maulbecker at the deli

As in other Le Soufflé outlets, you can order anything that's not on the menu—just give Chef Mike a day's notice. This restaurant has also been vegetarian-friendly.

Trademarks

Many clients from Manila patronize the outlet at The Manor because of the reputation of the chef who started Le Soufflé, William Anthony King. It maintains its trademarks—cozy ambience, the restaurant manager cum maitre d' who memorizes the names of the customers, a well-traveled executive chef and, of course, the changing artworks on the wall. During our stay, the restaurant was exhibiting photographs by Baguio artists. The big-ticket photos by Wig Tysmans sold fast.

Englishman Michael Phillips runs Le Soufflé at The Manor. After studying catering at the Kent Thanet Technical Café, he worked in London's famous Café Royal. He has worked in St. Moritz, Switzerland; Monte Carlo, France; the Center Hotel in Abu Dhabi, the Hotel Inter-Continental in Athens, the Savoy Hotel in London, Victoria Casino, the Sheraton in Ayers Rock Australia and the Old Melbourne Hotel.

Upon the invitation of King, Phillips came to Manila and worked in the Alabang Country club and the True Blue Restaurant in Angeles, Pampanga.

Le Soufflé has been busy since it opened last December. Maulbecker says families can stay at The Manor. While the children enjoy Camp John Hay, the husband can bring his wife to Le Soufflé and fall in love with her again.

Le Soufflé at The Manor is at Camp John Hay Manor, Loakan Road, Baguio City. Call (074) 446-0406 to 07 or the trunk line (074) 445-0431 to 50 local 1913 to 14

Not gaudy but Gaudí

From page C6

THE PINTXO called Aniseto

had become, through cultural transformation, our country's quintessential fiesta dish. So much so that a friend returned from Spain complaining: They do not know how to make good *paella*! Theirs is so plain!

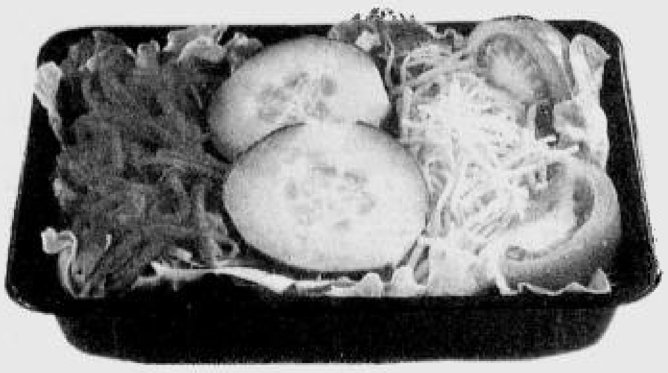
How could she know that the practice was to take the pan and rice to the field, and then flavor it with whatever was passing (a chicken, a rabbit) or growing (sweet *pimientos*, beans, etc.)? Thus did *paella* ascend from the working man's field lunch to the elite fiesta table.

Untried by us were the Bocadillos y Panes (sandwiches, including Sobreasada and Bonito), and the Platos y Raciones, full portions of the Russian salad and other appetizers, as well as Pimientos Rellenos de Carne and de Bacalao.

But we all made valiant efforts with the desserts. How could we turn away from the sweets of our childhoods and fiestas? Crema Catalana or créme brulée; Arroz con Leche: Profiteroles con Helado, and Tocino del Cielo, the sweetness of which makes you forget your name.

End with cafés. Solo (espresso), Mitad, Cortado, Nube, Capuccino, Carajillo, Café Irlandes. And dream of mornings in Spain. *Salud*!

***PIMIENTOS** piquillos rellenos con* **Bacalao**



WENDY'S salad bar offers garden-fresh, high-fiber veggies and fruits with your choice of dressing: thousand island, blue cheese, Caesar or creamy garlic.

Meatless menus till end of March

DINING-OUT

T.G.I. FRIDAY'S branches at Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City and Robinsons Place Manila will be open on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. It offers the freshest catch and greens with its Seafood and Salads "Full Meal Deals." Try broiled Mahi-Mahi with roasted pepper butter; pan-fried mahi-mahi served with Cajun cream sauce and Jambalaya rice; angel hair noodles tossed with honey citrus butter and served with grilled shrimp skewers; and grilled seafood platter. For the health-conscious, there are Cantonese Salad and Chef's Salad. All Seafood and Salads "Full Meal Deals" come with a bottomless serving of iced tea. T.G.I. Friday's is also at Glorietta, Malate, Quezon City, Alabang and Sta. Lucia East.

OUTBACK Restaurant offers seafood choices for only P375 and up. The selection includes Alaskan King Crabs. This pound and a quarter boozer treat is served with Aussie chips. You may also add a half-pound of King Crab legs to your favorite entrée for a reasonable price. Try the new Toowomba Pasta, which is made of fettuccine Alfredo mixed with seasoned shrimp, mushrooms and parmesan cheese. Try the North Atlantic Salmon that is lightly seasoned and grilled to perfection and served with steamed veggies. Outback branches are at Glorietta, Libis and Alabang Town Center.

HONSHU RESTAURANT in Malata offers Japanese seafood dishes at reasonable prices. For meatless Fridays, try Ebi Tempura (breaded shrimp and vegetables), special and regular sushi (assorted raw seafood with Japanese rice), or special and regular sashimi (assorted fresh fish and seafood). Or go for Sukiyaki, consisting of tofu, golden mushroom, *sotanghon*, beef, leek, parsley and fresh eggs. Honshu is at 1809 A. Mabini corner Remedios Sts. Call 521-7813.

HUA LAN Chinese Restaurant offers Lenten meals until March 31. Lenten dishes include Sweet and Sour Shrimps, Orange Fish, Seafood Fried Rice, Chopsuey Rice Topping and Calamares. Seafood Green Soup, Beef Hofan, Stuffed Beancurd, Hua Lan Fried Rice plus dimsum, rice toppings, noodles and à la carte dishes are also offered. Hua Lan is on Jupiter Street corner Reposo Street, Makati City. Call 896-7828 or 895-1681.

TEQUILA JOE'S Feast on Fasting Promo is ongoing until March 30. It offers Lenten items on regular menu prices. The menu includes: Appetizer Chips and salsa, crispy calamares, hot crab and artichoke, tuna sate, deep-fried mushrooms and popcorn shrimps. Joe N' Julius salad is also available plus an array of sandwiches you could choose from. You can also avail of the Fabulous Seafood, Quezos Locos and Roasted Garlic Shrimp. For the entrée, try Fish and Chips, Blackened Sea Bass, Sweet Salmon Grill and Tuna Fillet Mignon.

HOTSHOTS FLAME-GRILLED BURGERS introduces the Kingfisher burger. It's made of fresh fish fillet, a secret marinade of herbs and spices, organically grown lettuce, tartar sauce, wasabi and garlic bits. The Kingfisher Burger is available at Hotshots Pearl Drive, Glorietta 2, Jupiter, Libis, and Taft.

O CAFÊ, located at Robinsons Galleria and Power Plant Mall, offers Goi Cuon (fresh summer rolls from Vietnam and made of fresh vegetables served with peanut sauce), Ebi Tempura, Walnut Prawns and Steamed Fish with black beans and garlic. Try seafood and vegetable noodle dishes from Malaysia, Thailand and China.

CINNABON makes your journey a sweeter one this Holy Week, with its buy-three, get-one-free treat! On March 22-31, visit Cinnabon outlets at Shell-North Luzon Travel Plaza and Shell-South Luzon Travel Plaza. Buy three Cinnabon Express Pack (E-Pack) boxes and get another box, absolutely free!

Grads get delicious rewards for job well done

IMA Restaurant, Takayama and Bangus in Greenhills salute all graduates with its "Glad To Be A Grad" promo, where graduates eat for free! Simply come as a party of five to enjoy Ima's and Bangus' delectable Filipino dishes or Takayama's Japanese delicacies. If there's a fresh gradaute among you (with ID and proof of graduation for the year 2002), your meal will be absolutely free. Promo runs until April 15. Call Ima at 634-5070 or 896-8976; Takayama at 896-6563; and Bangus as 721-0198.

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant joins all graduates in celebrating the good life! As a special treat, the restaurant is giving away sign pens to all graduates who dine in with their family on this memorable day. Burgoo has branches at 310 Tomas Morato Extension, South Triangle, Diliman, QC; 3/L Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City; and 2/L, The Podium, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City.

PEKING GARDEN offers a specially priced set menu to honor graduates of 2002. Menu, priced at P4,500, includes sweet corn with chicken soup, the famous Peking duck, deep-fried peppercorn prawns, shredded duck with sea blubber, deep-fried fish fillet with thousand island sauce, braised e-fu noodles with mushrooms, Peking Garden fried rice, steamed supreme soup and pork dumplings and chilled almond jelly for dessert. Available lunch and dinner until April 15. Call 817-9066 or 817-9049

KIMPURA Japanese Restaurant offers graduates a free bottle of sparkling Martini Asti Spumante with a minimum food bill of P5,000 plus. Promo runs until April 15. Kimpura is located at Glorietta 2, Ayala Center and Greenhills Shopping Center. Call 893-2307 or 721-8816.

JADE GARDEN Chinese Restaurant congratulates members of Batch 2002 by offering a 30-percent discount on its imported barbecued Peking Duck. For a big group graduation celebration, Jade Garden has different banquet packages namely, Jade, Ruby, Pearl and Diamond with corresponding extra perks for a memorable occasion. Call 892-2319 or 892-2636.

THE ARISTOCRAT Restaurant offers special Filipino and Chinese dishes for the graduates. Chicken barbeque, *kare-kare*, crispy *pata*, hototai soup, mixed chopsuey and *sinigang na hipon* are some of the main courses featured in the Filipino Classics and Oriental Chinese cuisine. It comes in two separate meal packages suited for groups of 12-15 persons. Aristocrat will also give away free souvenir photographs and other special gifts to the graduates. Valid at Aristocrat, Roxas Boulevard only. Call 524-7671 to 80 or 521-8147.

TRADERS CAFÉ offers free pizza for every group of nine full-paying guests this month. The hotel offers bottomless iced tea promo at P120. The poolside cookout features three menu packages with a choice of seafood, meat and sausages to toss on the grill. All packages include an assortment of skewered vegetables, corn-on-the-cob, rice and tropical fruits at only P350. This promo is available daily between 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

MANILA DIAMOND HOTEL'S Sky Lounge Music Bar offers special party packages for the graduates. The party package is available from Sunday to Thursday at P20,000 consumable on food and beverage. A maximum of 30 persons per group can avail of the package. It also includes a pre-reserved section of the Sky Lounge and a complimentary cake. Call 526-2211. Buffet treats are available at the Manila Diamond Hotel's Palm Court Café.

ALABANG TOWN CENTER has places that offer food choices for special gatherings such as graduation lunch or dinner. ATC houses about 80 dining outlets that cater to the varying tastes of mall-goers, families and *barkadas*. Gerry's Grill is a top favorite among families, professionals and young people with its best-selling menu—*sisig*, grilled specials like *pusit*, seafood *kare kare* and *pinaputok na pla pla*. Danish Connection offers European specialties from England, Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and Germany. Dusit Thani serves spicy Thai food prepared and cooked in the most authentic way. The set menu includes: Thai soup favorites such as Tom Yam Kung and Thai Sukiyaki; the Spring Roll with Thai Soup; Phat that Noodles; Bagoong Fried Rice; and specials like Chicken Pandan; Seafood in Chili Sauce; Chicken Garlic; Beef Panang Curry; and desserts like Thai Halo Halo and Thai Taco.

GOING ITALIAN

Gretchen Cojuangco (center), wife of San Miguel Corporation chair Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr. (left), cuts the ceremonial ribbon opening the new Italian fine-dining resto Papalino's at the El Pueblo Real de Manila near the intersection of Julia Vargas Street and ADB Avenue. Also in photo are Marilou Laogan (second from left), Papalino's president; lawyer Danny Laogan, adviser; and Ivygail Miranda, chief of staff. Others behind the venture include papalino's chair Marcelo O. Yap and vice chair Jovita G. Yap. Other guests who attended the affair included Vice President Teofisto Guinguona and Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Sales gimmick is a trap

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

WHEN a sales gimmick is too good to be true, beware! It could be a rip off, warned victim Maria R. Gutierrez.

"Please publish my bad experience to warn other consumers," Gutierrez requested. She related that she was on her way to the supermarket at Liberty commercial center in Mandaluyong when two glib-tongued salesmen offered her free coupons for a number-combination-game. She joined the game and won the first prize, a microwave oven.

She went with the salesmen to claim her prize at the company's display/exhibit area in the mall. But before she could get her prize, she was told she had to buy either a vacuum cleaner, water purifier, cooking set, or any of the other items the store was promoting.

When Gutierrez insinuated that she was not interested, the saleswoman persuaded her to try another *kiskis-panalo* coupon. She won again, this time the prize was a gift certificate worth P1,000. But to use the certificate, she was told she had to buy an item from them. She returned the coupon and started to leave. At that point, other people joined the saleswoman and told Gutierrez that with her winning streak, she should give it another shot. She did and won the grand prize.

The grand prize was supposed to be an array of products worth P65,000. It included, among others, a halogen desk lamp, an aquarium lamp, a portable induction cooker, and a 20-piece cooking set. The catch, however, was she could only get the bonanza if she paid for any one of the products the store was promoting. She selected a water purifier worth P23,500.

"They asked for my credit card and had it verified. They then commenced the processing of sale, and without bothering to ask my permission, they closed the deal. Since I was interested in the water purifier, I let them," Gutierrez said.

It turned out that a similar water purifier was on sale at hardware stores such as Ace and the shop at SM City Manila for only P3,699. Her husband, Ares Gutierrez of People's Taliba, discovered the rip off.

Slow drag at BFAD

A sick man could die if his life depended on the Bureau of Food and Drugs where things move at a snail's pace. You couldn't get an answer to any question without first writing a formal letter of request addressed to the bureau director. If he happened to be on leave, you would wait forever.

Just asking. How long will it take BFAD to process the laboratory test of those contaminated candies that reportedly poisoned over 300 students in Davao City last month? And what about the analysis of the expired milk donated to malnourished children last week? That also goes for the local sausages suspected of having very high levels of preservatives.

Samples of these spoiled products were reportedly sent to BFAD laboratory in Alabang for processing. Knowing how slow it takes to process things there, we can only fear for the accuracy of the tests, if and when they are released.

By the way, we hope BFAD can regulate discount sales at supermarkets and duty-free shops of food products that are about to expire. Many of these products, due to improper storage and warmer temperature in the Philippines, are no longer fit for consumption although their expiration dates have not yet lapsed. At risk of early spoilage are dairy products, including milk and candy.

And speaking of expiry dates, our attention was called to the confusing ways dates are written on the label of imported products. Some countries in Europe write the dates in numerical figures starting with the day, followed by month and year: for example, 03/03/02 (third day of March, year 2002). Japanese products have it in numerical dating system starting with the year, followed by the month, then the day (02/03/03). The Philippines follows the US system starting with month, date and year (03/03/02).

Unless BFAD or the Department of Trade and Industry explain the varying systems, consumers will not bother with expiration dates.

By the way, there ought to be a guideline on the correct way of placing tag prices on product packages such that they don't cover critical information including expiration dates, nutritional facts and manufacturer's address.

Action of Maynilad on complaints

Calling Vic Quiton! Here's the reply of Maynilad Water Services Inc. to the complaint we aired last Feb. 24: "An analysis of Mr. Quiton's consumption shows that for the last 10 months, his average consumption was 23.4 cubic meter, with a high of 29 cm registered last May 2001. Therefore, the variation from 19 cm to 23 cm is well within his consumption pattern.

Maynilad branch manager Regino E. Cruz further explained the reason for the water bill increases. "We had earlier informed our customers through press releases and flyers sent with their billings that government has allowed several rate increases to allow Maynilad to recover past and present foreign exchange losses. First increase (P4.21 per cm) took effect October 2001 to allow us to recover forex losses from Aug. 1, 1997 to Dec. 31, 2000. It will be in effect until December 2002.

"Another increase (P4.68 per cm) started this January to allow for the recovery of present and accrued forex losses through the newly instituted Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (P4.07 per cm), adjustments in the Consumer Price Index (P0.45 per cm) and the Extraordinary Price Adjustment provision (P0.15 per cm)."

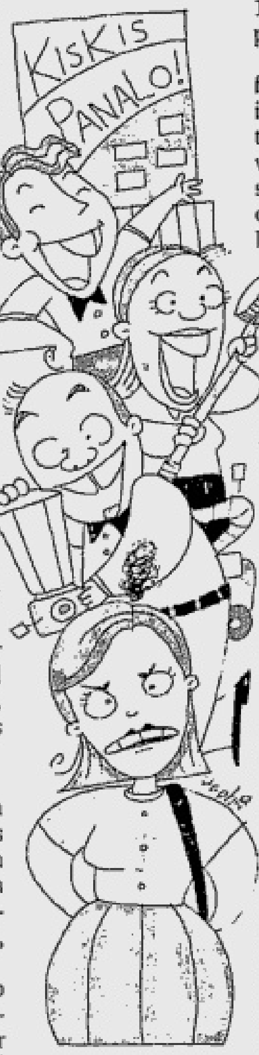
Here's Maynilad's response to Serapion Metilla's complaint: "Even before your column came out, we undertook the following actions: Metilla was informed that the change in service connection would start April at the cost of P5,495.60 to cover transfer of tapping point.

"As he requested Feb. 22, we had closed his service connection on Feb. 26. Moreover, in answer to his claims of zero consumption, we are reconsidering his January and February 2002 billings and will inform him accordingly."

Maynilad apologizes to customers

Maynilad manager Cruz wrote: "We would like to take this occasion to apologize to our customers for the billing inaccuracies as we are still in the process of ironing out the kinks in our internal systems. Please rest assured that we are acting promptly on the complaints of our customers."

E-mail the author at mgiron@csi.com.ph



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-ANNE MARIE IÑIGUEZ
11 years old, Grade VI, St. Theresa's College

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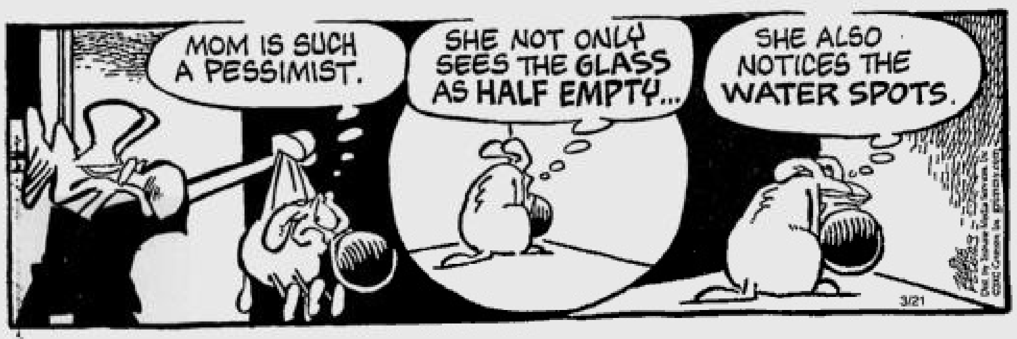
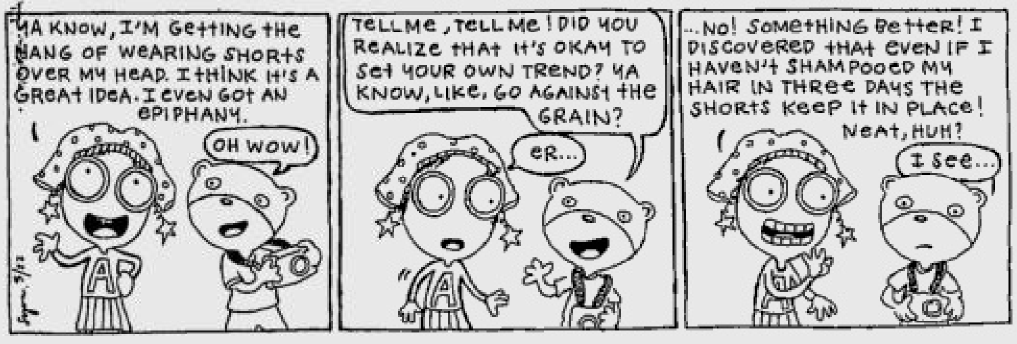
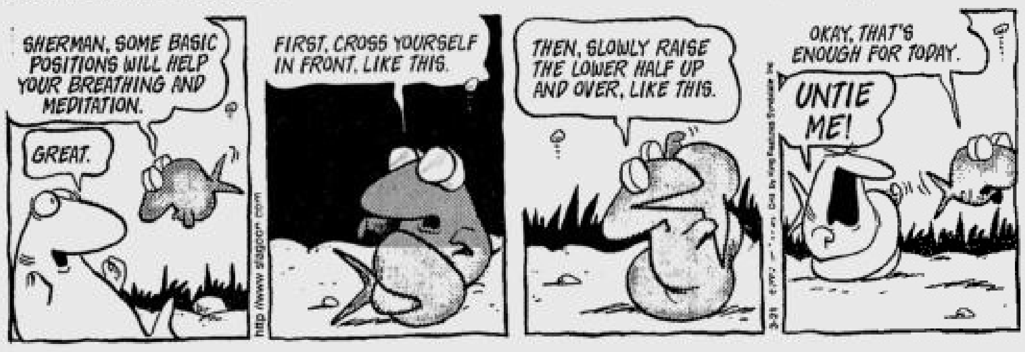
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


MOM IS SUCH A PESSIMIST.
SHE NOT ONLY SEES THE GLASS AS HALF EMPTY...
SHE ALSO NOTICES THE WATER SPOTS.
3/21

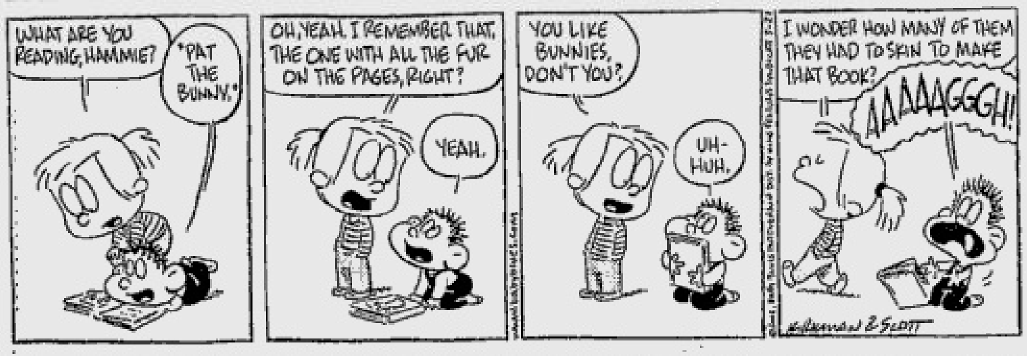
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YA KNOW, I'M GETTING THE HANG OF WEARING SHORTS OVER MY HEAD. I THINK IT'S A GREAT IDEA. I EVEN GOT AN EPIPHANY.
OH WOW!
TELL ME, TELL ME! DID YOU REALIZE THAT IT'S OKAY TO SET YOUR OWN TREND? YA KNOW, LIKE, GO AGAINST THE GRAIN?
ER...
...NO! SOMETHING BETTER! I DISCOVERED THAT EVEN IF I HAVEN'T SHAMPOOED MY HAIR IN THREE DAYS THE SHORTS KEEP IT IN PLACE! NEAT, HUH?
I SEE...

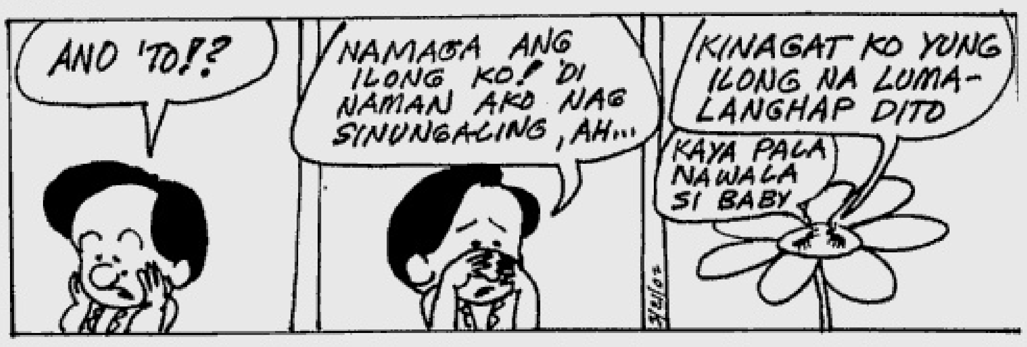
SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


SHERMAN, SOME BASIC POSITIONS WILL HELP YOUR BREATHING AND MEDITATION.
GREAT.
FIRST, CROSS YOURSELF IN FRONT, LIKE THIS.
THEN, SLOWLY RAISE THE LOWER HALF UP AND OVER, LIKE THIS.
OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
UNTIE ME!
http://www.slagoon.com

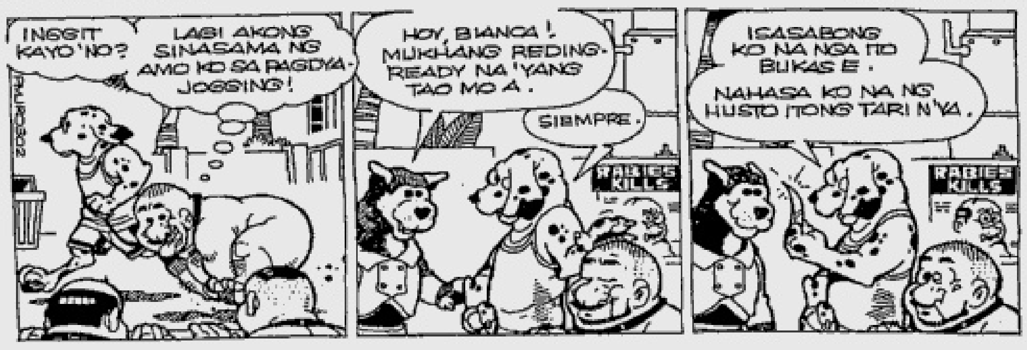
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT ARE YOU READING, HAMMIE?
"PAT THE BUNNY."
OH, YEAH. I REMEMBER THAT. THE ONE WITH ALL THE FUR ON THE PAGES, RIGHT?
YEAH.
YOU LIKE BUNNIES, DON'T YOU?
UH-HUH.
I WONDER HOW MANY OF THEM THEY HAD TO SKIN TO MAKE THAT BOOK?
AAAAAGGGH!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

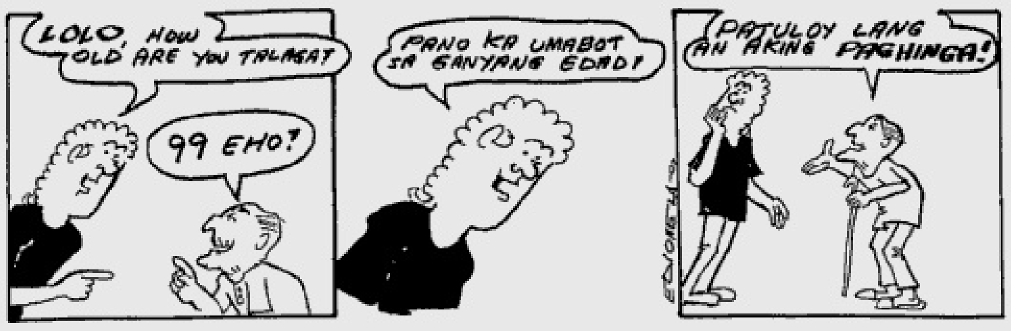
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


ANO 'TO!?
NAMAGA ANG ILONG KO! 'DI NAMAN AKO NAG SINUNGALING, AH...
KINAGAT KO YUNG ILONG NA LUMALANGHAP DITO
KAYA PALA NAWALA SI BABY

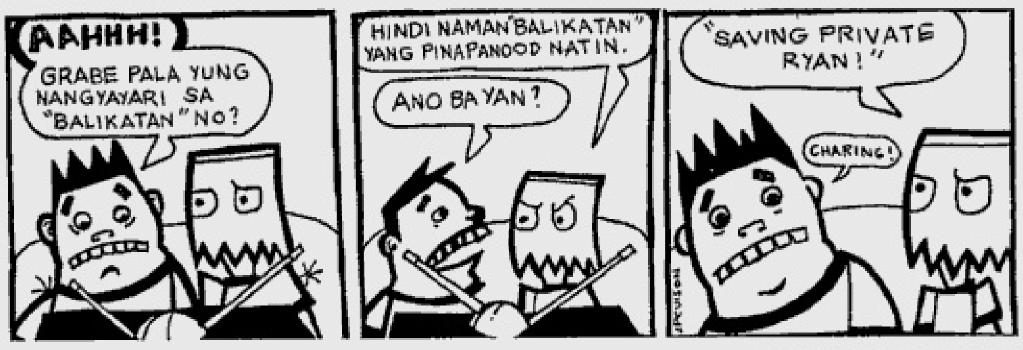
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


INGGIT KAYO 'NO?
LAGI AKONG SINASAMA NG AMO KO SA PAGDYA-JOGGING!
HOY, BIANCA! MUKHANG REDING-READY NA 'YANG TAO MO A.
SIEMPRE.
RABIES KILLS
ISASABONG KO NA NGA ITO BUKAS E.
NAHASA KO NA NG HUSTO ITONG TARI N'YA.

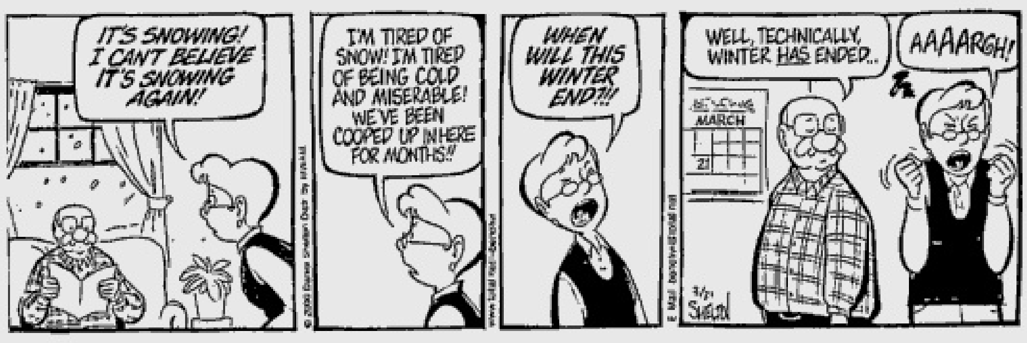
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


LOLO, HOW OLD ARE YOU TALAGA?
99 EHO?
PANO KA UMABOT SA GANYANG EDAD?
PATULOY LANG AN AKING PAGHINGA!

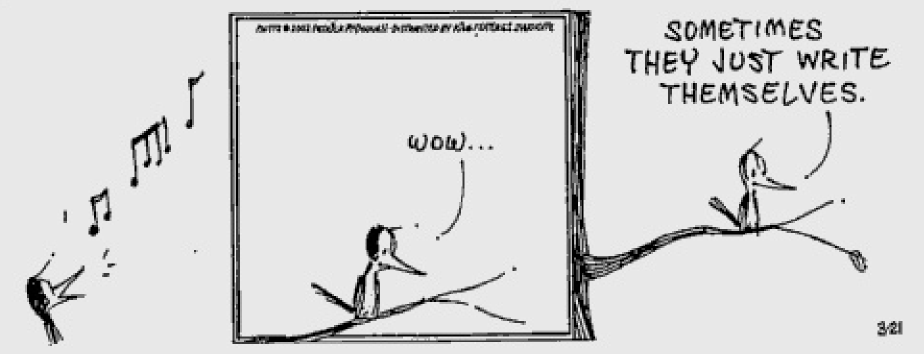
GARAPATA BLOOD BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


AAHHH!
GRABE PALA YUNG NANGYAYARI SA "BALIKATAN" NO?
HINDI NAMAN "BALIKATAN" YANG PINAPANOOD NATIN.
ANO BA YAN?
"SAVING PRIVATE RYAN!"
CHARING!

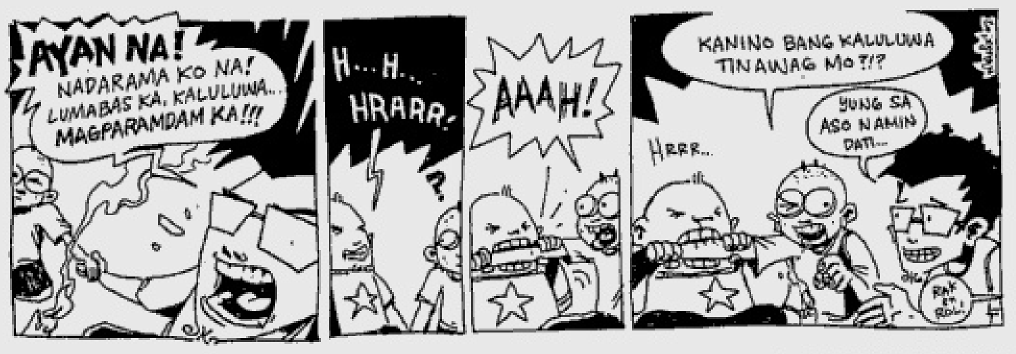
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S SNOWING! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S SNOWING AGAIN!
I'M TIRED OF SNOW! I'M TIRED OF BEING COLD AND MISERABLE! WE'VE BEEN COOPED UP IN HERE FOR MONTHS!!
WHEN WILL THIS WINTER END?!!
WELL, TECHNICALLY, WINTER HAS ENDED..
AAAARGH!
MARCH
21

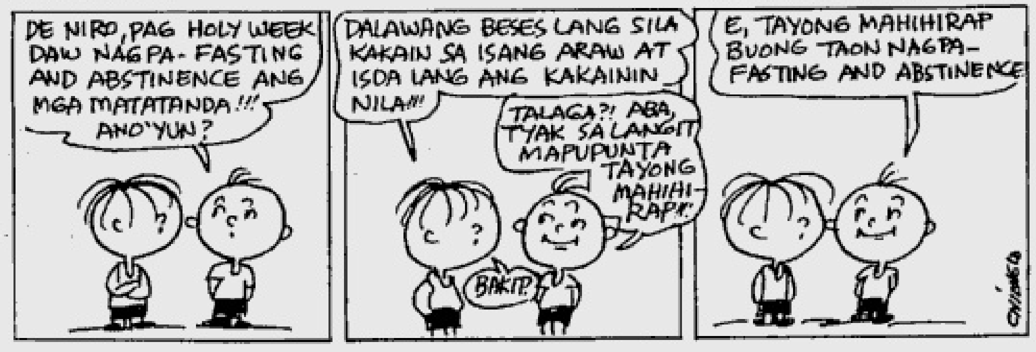
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WOW...
SOMETIMES THEY JUST WRITE THEMSELVES.
3/21

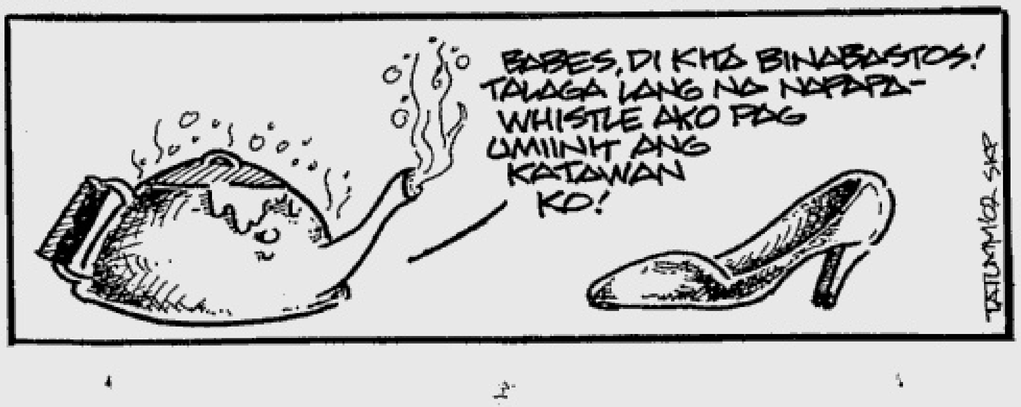
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


AYAN NA!
NADARAMA KO NA! LUMABAS KA, KALULUWA.. MAGPARAMDAM KA!!!
H...H... HRARR!
AAAH!
KANINO BANG KALULUWA TINAWAG MO?!?
HRRR..
YUNG SA ASO NAMIN DATI...
RAK EN ROL!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO, PAG HOLY WEEK DAW NAGPA-FASTING AND ABSTINENCE ANG MGA MATATANDA!!! ANO'YUN?
DALAWANG BESES LANG SILA KAKAIN SA ISANG ARAW AT ISDA LANG ANG KAKAININ NILA!!
TALAGA?! ABA, TYAK SA LANGIT MAPUPUNTA TAYONG MAHIHIRAP!
BAKIT?
E, TAYONG MAHIHIRAP BUONG TAON NAGPA-FASTING AND ABSTINENCE!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BABES, DI KITA BINABASTOS! TALAGA LANG NA NAPAPA-WHISTLE AKO PAG UMIINIT ANG KATAWAN KO!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rosie O'Donnell, Matthew Broderick, Eddie Money, Timothy Dalton
Happy Birthday: You'll be anxious to make things happen this year. You will have the driving force to achieve whatever you set out to do. You may face some obstacles along the way but nothing that you can't handle. Stay calm and act responsibly. Your numbers are 8, 19, 25, 33, 36, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will be energetic and playful, engaging and fun to be with. You can make new friends or have a great time with the ones you already have. Plan to get out and do things.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may want to put some of your career plans in motion today. Your determined attitude, dedication and discipline should be more than enough to help you move in a positive direction.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You may have difficulty seeing things clearly at an emotional level. If you feel you must make changes, go ahead but don't burn bridges.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You should be doing all you can to secure your home and property. Investments made today, especially those pertaining to your residence, will be favorable. Focus on domestic chores that you've been putting off.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): If you are happy with your current partner let him or her know. If you aren't, you may want to make the changes required in order to set yourself free.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Be careful what you say to whom today. Someone who is trying to make you look bad may misinterpret what you say. Don't let your emotions get involved in your business.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You will meet some interesting people if you attend a seminar or sign up for an interest course. You have a lot to offer as well as a lot to learn through this type of interaction.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take a look at your personal papers and update whatever is necessary before it's too late. You may want to check out something that would raise the value of your home.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Someone is trying to get you to commit to something. Maybe it's time you faced the music and took care of these personal issues once and for all. Ask yourself point blank what would make you happy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your heart and soul will be in your work today. The busier you are, the better. If you have too much idle time on your hands you will end up getting anxious and upset.

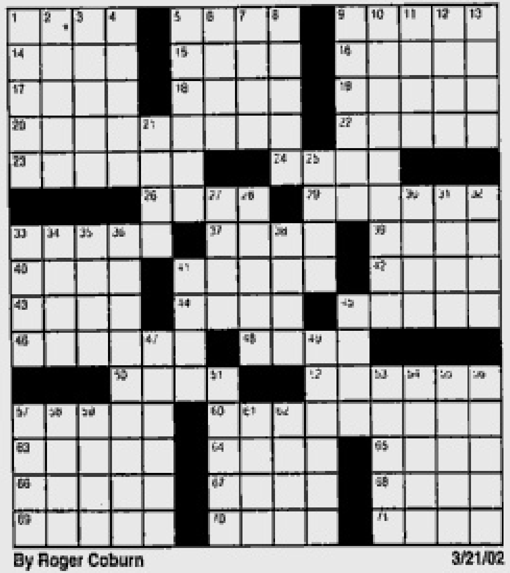
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You've got the travel bug. Short or long trips will lead to chance meetings. Listen to the people you encounter and you will be sure to obtain valuable information.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Be careful not to give in to someone who is bullying you. Stand up for yourself and don't do anything you don't want to do. Keep tabs on how much you spend and put some money away for unexpected bills.

Birthday Baby: You will have sudden and unexpected changes throughout life. You are independent and free-spirited. You know what you like and are always eager to take part in whatever is going on around you.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Roger Coburn
Summerville, GA

ACROSS
1 Sacred bull
5 Killer whale
9 VCR button
14 Nota __
15 Wander
16 Measuring strip
17 Needle case
18 Sicilian volcano
19 Nimble
20 Lethargic like a composer?
22 Outcropping
23 Takes the helm
24 New York stadium
26 Long period
29 "Gunsmoke" star
33 Landing area
37 African nation
39 Sand hill
40 Bow-stern connection
41 Sufficiently polite
42 Great Lake
43 Emphatic typeface: abbr.
44 Shoshones
45 Liquid impacts
46 Component
48 Feeble
50 Blues great Fitzgerald
52 Plays charades
57 Queen of the Bible
60 Composer's game?
63 Gold measure
64 Jacob's brother
65 "The __ of Genji"
66 Mrs. Kramden
67 False mannerisms
68 Land in the drink?
69 Support-line employees
70 Art of the absurd
71 Kick back

DOWN
1 Tasman and Muzorewa
2 Little in Lille
3 Occupied
4 Confiscate
5 Threat ender
6 Memory method
7 Fires
8 Build up
9 Sketcher's need
10 Composer's ear?
11 Nobel winner Wiesel
12 Monk's room
13 Not kosher
21 Golf hazard
25 Frozen fall
27 Pass over
28 Orange variety
30 Continental money
31 Clipped-off piece
32 Dates
33 Pass over lightly
34 Place for a chapeau
35 500 sheets
36 Composer's parting words?
38 One Simpson
41 Ringlet
45 Teller's partner
47 Makes joyous
49 Stheno's sister
51 To come
53 Up and about
54 Cut it out
55 Narrates
56 Shooting at clay targets
57 Card game for three
58 Patriot Nathan
59 Roberts or Idle
61 Home of the most people
62 Scotland __

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	A	M	■	O	N	C	E	■	A	M	A	S	S
I	N	G	E	■	N	O	R	A	■	L	A	B	E	L
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S	E	R	V	I	C	E	C	L	U	B	■	L	T	D
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O	H	A	R	E	■	S	H	E	A	■	E	R	O	S
C	E	R	E	A	L	■	U	S	N	■	R	I	C	A
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Y	A	R	D	S	■	L	A	S	T	■	D	E	S	K

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3/21/02

All-you-can-eat, or all-you-can-cook, 'bangus'

BANGUS galore is the main feature in Cabalen's eat-all-you-can, eat-all-you-want Lenten buffet, which costs only P242 per person. The sumptuous treat includes *bistig bangus* belly, *inihaw* back *bangus* in *mustasa* and *buro*, *rellenong bangus*, *quilain bangus* with cucumber, crispy *balat ng bangus*, *tortang bangus*, *embotidong bangus*, fried *daing na bangus* and *lumpiang bangus*.

Cabalen restaurants are located at West Avenue, QC, 214 Katipunan Ave., QC; 4/L SM Megamall B; Glorietta III, Ayala Center, Makati City; 2/L Robinsons Place Ermita, Manila; 2/L SM North Edsa, QC; 2/L SM City Mall Manila and Brick Road Area, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, Cainta, Rizal. For catering on private functions, call Flor Villote or Gigi Gagno at 647-4988/5088.

For our readers who like to cook, here are a few recipes using *bangus*, courtesy of Cabalen.

Crispy Balat ng Bangus

1 kg skin *bangus*
1 c vinegar
1 tbsp salt
2 cloves garlic
1 tsp black pepper, ground

Scrape all *bangus* meat on skin, set aside. Combine all ingredients in a clean food container. Add *bangus* skin, allow to marinate overnight. Remove from the marinade sauce. Sun dry.

Heat oil in a wok, deep-fry for 15 seconds. Drain excess oil. Serve with vinegar sauce.

Tortang Back Bangus

2 kg back *bangus*
¾ c soy sauce
¾ c calamansi extract
½ tsp black pepper, ground
2 tbsp margarine
1 pc garlic, native
1 pc medium red onion
1 pc big carrot
2 pc potato
2 pc red bell pepper
2 pc green bell pepper
3 tbsp raisins
3 tbsp green peas

Remove back *bangus* skin. Slice *bangus* meat into medium cubes. In a clean food keeper, marinate sliced *bangus* in soy sauce, calamansi and black pepper for 30 minutes. Peel and slice onions; peel and crush garlic; set aside both. Wash, peel and slice carrots into cubes; do the same with potatoes; set aside. Wash and discard seeds of red and green bell pepper; slice into cubes, set aside.

In a wok, sauté garlic in margarine until golden brown. Add onion and cook until wilted. Add marinated back *bangus* (do not stir). Cover and bring to boil for a minute. Add carrots, stir and cover. Reduce fire. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add potato, red and green bell pepper, raisins and green peas. Stir then put cover and continue simmering for 10 minutes. Taste.

Bistig Tiyan ng Bangus

1.5 kg *bangus* belly
¾ c sauce
¾ c calamansi extract
1 tsp black pepper, ground
1/8 c cooking oil
1 pc big white onion (for toppings)
1 pc native garlic
1 pc medium red onion
3 pc tomatoes
1 c water

Thaw and wash *bangus* belly. Drain thoroughly then set aside. Slice into serving sizes approximately 1½-inch thick. In a clean pan, marinate *bangus* belly in soy sauce, calamansi and ground black pepper for 30 minutes. Set aside. Peel and slice white onion in round slices. Sauté for 15 seconds and set aside. Peel and slice red onions, wash and slice tomatoes, set aside. Peel and crush garlic, set aside.

In a wok, sauté garlic until golden brown. Add onion and cook until wilted. Add tomato and cook until mushy. Add marinated *tiyan ng bangus* one by one (include the sauce). Add 1 c water. Cover and boil for 1 minute. Reduce fire and simmer for 30 minutes. Taste. Serve.

Embotido Bangus

1 kg back *bangus*
3 pc egg yolks
2 pc whole pickles
1 pc carrot
1 stalk celery
2 pc red bell pepper
2 pc medium red onion
3 tbsp raisins

Filling:
½ slice cheese
1 tsp black pepper, ground
1 tsp white sugar
2 tbsp flour
2 tbsp cornstarch
1 tbsp salt
½ kg *empella*
1 roll aluminum foil

Scrape *bangus* meat leaving only the skin. Chop *bangus* meat finely then set aside. Wash and discard seeds of red bell pepper and mince. Peel and mince onion, carrots, celery and pickles, set aside. Grate cheese and set aside.

In a clean mixing bowl, combine all ingredients. Mix well. Wrap 300 g mixture with *empella* then wrap in aluminum foil. Steam for 30 minutes. Let it cool. Serve.

VILLARUEL'S

CABALEN'S *bangus* festival

Young Pinoy chefs in Food mag

THIS month, Food Magazine's new series on young Filipino chefs features Dennis Hipolito who, after passing his dental board exams, went on to the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in New York. He finished a degree in pastry making and now makes some of the most notable cakes in town.

In observance of the Lenten season, Food also gives four great ways to cook the bounties from the sea and five easy-to-cook delicious seafood recipes including Prawns Thermidor, Stir-fried Garlic Crab Claws, Kilawing Pusit, Greek-Style Scampi and Norwegian Salmon in Creamy Tarragon Sauce.

A source of fresh, high-quality seafood at reasonable prices, the Fishmonger store at the new Pioneer Center in Pasig City also gives useful tips on how to tell fresh from stale fish and other seafood.

"American Adobo" lead star Christopher de Leon talks about his cooking experience and food favorites, including those cooked by wife Sandy.

Food Magazine is at National Bookstore or your neighborhood magazine stands. Call 631-9345 for subscription.

Picnic meals in Flavors mag

BEFORE YOU pack your bags and get on with your long-deserved summer vacation, check out Flavors' March issue, which is loaded with delectable recipes to make your picnic meals doubly special.

Try the mouthwatering barbecue and grill recipes such as Lemonade Salmon Barbecue, Roasted Cornish Game Hen, Baby Back Ribs, Lamb Rack Barbecue, Beef Ribs in Barbecue Sauce, Tower Barbecue Combination, Inihaw na Salmon and Thai Barbecue. Or you may opt for native sizzlers like Sizzling Chicken Ass, Sizzling Seafoods and Pork Binagoongan.

Plus, you get to learn how to make gumpaste flowers, leaves and baskets; give first-aid treatments and techniques; and decorate your home as inspired by the basic forces of nature. All for P75. Available at Goodwill Bookstore and other book and magazine shops. Call 752-3551/3556/3557.

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Lalo na kapag may sarili kang Sony VCD Component o Sharp Karaoke mula sa Sing na Sing Raffle. Kaya bili na ng Strepsils sa alinmang branch ng Mercury Drug sa Greater Manila Area. Ihulog ang wrapper sa dropbox kasama ng resibo na may pangalan, tirahan, telephone number at signature. Kapag may Strepsils, siguradong may 'sing-aloooong'!

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Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0182, Series of 2002.

Not gaudy but Gaudí

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

HOW different could it be, we wondered, in this country, in this city with the best Spanish restaurants in Asia, even beating Hong Kong and its cosmopolitan beat and ability to import anything from anywhere? Well, it is.

For one thing it is named Gaudí, not after a food or a place, but after an architect, Antonio Gaudí y Cornet (1852-1926), whom no one who has been to Barcelona can forget. He was a Catalan architect, sculptor and ceramic artist, "noted for the spatial freedom and organic unity of his work." Born at Reus, Tarragona, Spain, he studied at the Barcelona school of architecture, and has been valued for his "bizarre" imagination.

"He studied natural form and developed an expressive art nouveau by giving vitality to line, space and volume as well as by original construction." Impossible to forget, once seen, are the Cathedral of Sagrada Familia (still unfinished), the Guell colony church at St. Coloma de Cervello, Casa Batllo and Casa Mila, his use of colored tile mosaics to encrust surfaces, and his fluid lines and fantastic sculptural imagination in chimneys, ventilation and fluctuating iron trelliswork in gates and balconies.

The Gaudí style is echoed in this 3-month-old restaurant, Gaudí Bar-Restaurante (114 Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, Makati; tel. 897-2612; fax 890-4729; e-mail gaudi@skyinet.net; open daily except Sunday). A modest, mosaic-ornamented front, and more Gaudí-reminiscent mosaics as wall décor (made by the owner's daughter), express this spirit.

The owner, Alexandra Got de Cacho, lived in Málaga for 20 years, where she had a restaurant. Born in the Philippines, and long resident in Bais, Negros Oriental, she and her Filipino husband decided to return home and establish a restaurant here. She is the manager and chief cook, supervising a crew of Filipino chefs; her son-in-law, Eduardo M. Moreno, who worked in television in Málaga, is the assistant manager.

PAELLA de Mariscos

After 20 years in Malaga, Spain, Alexandra Got de Cacho has come home and opened this new Spanish restaurant that echoes the architect's style

From 'pintxos' to 'paella'

The menu consists of Bebidas, Pintxos y Platos of contemporary Spanish cuisine. The one-page list of appetizers divides into 24 Pintxos Calientes, Pintxos Frios and Delicias de la Crisis. We four were tempted to choose one of each, as though, Bobing Venida said, we were in Madrid, moving from *tasca* to *tasca*, but Eduardo controlled us, and suggested a choice few, which we could share in *hating kapatid* mode. Lando de Guzman, who had discovered the place, was strict about this.

With white and red house wine, and a pitcher of sangria, we had Croquetas de Pollo, Jamon o Bacalao (together in each croquette); Tigre (stuffed mussels with capsicum); Ondartza (pan-fried Camembert with raspberry *coulis*); Rollito Gaudí (tiny *lumpia* stuffed with *chorizo*); Gambas Sarong (shrimp wrapped in bacon), all hot.

PINTXOS Bonito and Pimiento Rusa Chatka

The cold appetizers were: Gilda (anchovies, tiny mild chills and olives on a skewer, which must be taken all together): Tonena (olive, *pimiento*, onion and pickle skewer); Aniceto (egg and shrimp bite); Chatka (crabmeat spread, said to be the most popular item). Although the Delicias de la Crisis (Tosta de Caviar, Tosta Caviar y Chatka, Cojonudo) were tempting, we agreed that we should venture further into the menu and sample other things.

Ms Cacho was helpful suggesting a homey, comfortable Sopa de Ajo of broth, garlic slices, bread portions and a raw egg. Ummm—one of our all-time favorites. (We could have Lentejas con Chorizo and Fabada Asturiana another time.) Lapulapu al Pilpil, with olive oil and garlic, small and tender. (We were, of course, tempted as well by the Bangus à la Espalda, boneless *bangus* pan-fried on its back with garlic and chili.)

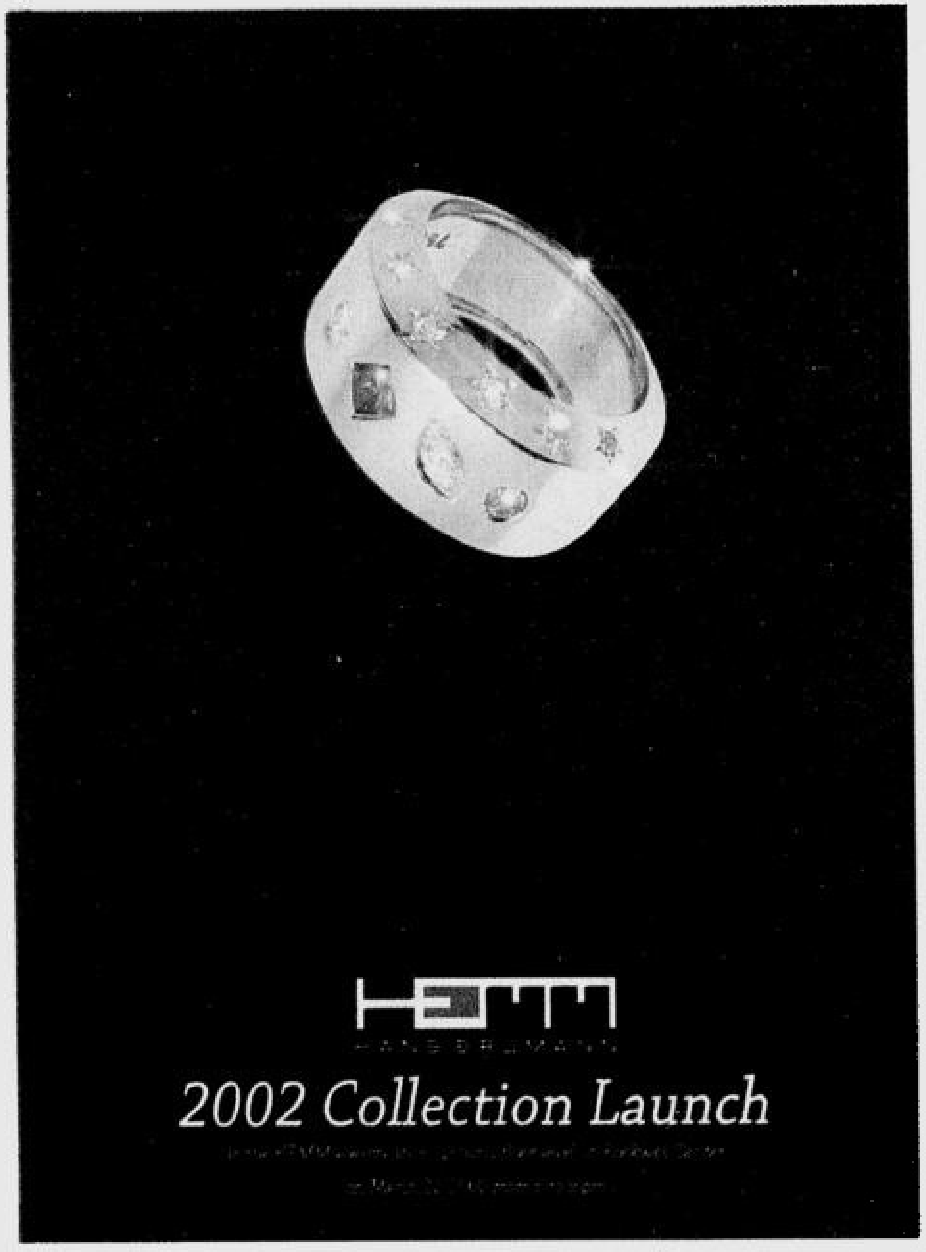
Although tempted by such meats as lamb chops grilled the Castillian way, or Chuleton Villagodio (grilled prime rib steak) and San Jacobo (breaded chicken breast stuffed with Manchego cheese and Jamon Serrano), we agreed: Tomorrow is another day.

We ended with *paella*: not Arros amb Crosta (crusty rice the Alicante way); Arros Negre; Arroz con Marisco; Arroz à la Valenciana (the most popular item). Instead, the house specialty: Arroz con Langosta, lobster *paella* with lots of wonderful crust (*tutong*) sticking to the pan. Squeeze some lemon on it, and savor the taste of Spain.

Fiesta dish

We Filipinos are most oriented to Arroz à la Valenciana, which we make the quintessential fiesta dish by adding everything we like: ham, sausages (what we call *chorizo de* Bilbao, which the people of Bilbao do not know), chicken, clams, *pimientos morrones*, green peas, shrimps, crab, etc. What was once a field dish in Spain, cooked in flat pans balanced over stones on wood fires,

NOT/ p.C2



Sylvia Cancio
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KIDS COOKING: This course teaches your kids the basics of Cooking and Baking, HANDS ON. Choose any session that interests your child from AGES 7-12 years. Reservations required. P 700/lesson or P 3,000/per Course of 5 lessons.

KIDS 1, Lesson 1: Monday, April 1 or April 22, 9-12nn Banana Lolipop, Ice Cone Cake, Spaghetti Crust Pie, Teddy Bear Bread, Apple Crumble

KIDS 1, Lesson 2: Tuesday, April 2 or April 23, 9-12nn Cinnamon Toasts, Marshmallow Crispies, Peanut Butter with Dippers, Mini Hamburgers, No Bake Snackers, Cheesy Cheese Pie

KIDS 1, Lesson 3: Wednesday, April 3 or April 24, 9-12nn Clubhouse Sandwich Compleat, Biscuit Bazaar, Chicken Fingers, Wrap Me-Up Spaghetti, Popcorn Snowmen

KIDS 1, Lesson 4: Thursday, April 4 or April 25, 9-12nn No Bake Cheesecake with Oreo, Designasaur A Pizza, Apple Cheese Friters, Round Dog with Chili con Carne, Mexican Fruit Platter

KIDS 1, Lesson 5: Friday, April 5 or April 26, 9-12nn Moist Chocolate Cake with White Frosting, Cream of Chicken Soup, Tacos, Super Chicken Salad, Creamy Chocolate Fudge

KIDS 2, Lesson 1: Monday, April 8 or April 29, 9-12nn Teddy Bear Pancakes, Tiny Tuna Baskets, Mini Springrolls, Fruity Sugar Cookies, Chocolate Cupcakes

KIDS 2, Lesson 2: Tuesday, April 9 or April 30, 9-12nn Apple Cheese Friters, Carrot Cupcakes, Oriental Fried Rice, Ham/Chicken Empanadas, Mango Crepes

KIDS 2, Lesson 3: Wednesday, April 10 or May 1, 9-12nn Farm Style Oatmeal Cookies, Caesar's Salad, Fish and Potato Croquettes, Chicken Cakes with Teriyaki Sauce, Chocolate Crinkles

KIDS 2, Lesson 4: Thursday, April 11 or May 2, 9-12nn Blueberry Lattice, Japanese Style Hamburgers, Rice Omelette, Five Flavor Noodles, Beef Stroganoff

KIDS 2, Lesson 5: Friday, April 12 or May 3, 9-12nn Lemon Tarts, Mongolian Stir-fry, Creamy Baked Spaghetti, Dimsum, Pineapple Upsidedown Cake

KIDS 3, Lesson 1: Monday, April 15 or May 6, 9-12nn Pinwheel Kebabs, Tuna on Shoestring, Sesame Cheese Twists, Fisherman's Burger, Choco Chunky Brownies

KIDS 3, Lesson 2: Tuesday, April 16 or May 7, 9-12nn Express Fruit Salad, Macaroni Cheese, Japanese Fried Chicken, Quick Rolls and Bears, Mini Quiche

KIDS 3, Lesson 3: Wednesday, April 17 or May 8, 9-12nn Creamy Potato Salad, Mini Apple Pie, Cheese Cupcakes, Hotdog Rollups, Korean Bulgogi

KIDS 3, Lesson 4: Thursday, April 18 or May 9, 9-12nn Bumbos, Sausage Rolls, Tiny Teriyaki, Lengua Cookies, Lazy Lasagna

KIDS 3, Lesson 5: Friday, April 19 or May 10, 9-12 nn Banana Bread, Chocolate Jelly Roll, Barbecued Pork, Katsudon, Kiddies Cream de Fruta

April 1, Monday, 1:30-5:30 pm PIES and CHEESECAKES Apple Pie with Streusel, Blueberry Cheesecake, No Bake Cheesecake, Oreo Cheesecake, Quiche Lorraine P 1,200

April 2, Tuesday, 1-6 pm YEAST DOUGHS Pan de Sal, Ensaimada Espesyal (w/ Cheese & Ube Filing), Dinner Rolls, Pear Walnut Bread P 1,200

April 3, Wednesday, 1:30-5:30 pm MY FAVOURITE CHICKEN RECIPES 1 Roast Chicken with Gravy and Herb Potatoes, Chicken Curry with Condiments, Coq Au Vin, Chicken a la Kiev, Chicken Croquettes P 1,000

April 4, Thursday, 1:30-5:30 pm COOKING and BAKING 1 California Pizza, Cheesy Macaroni, Apple Pie, Cappuccino Brownies with White Chocolate Espresso Sauce, Mango Shake, Iced Tea P 1,000

April 5, Friday, 1:30-5:30 pm BAKESHOP FAVOURITES Lenguas de Gato, Soft Mamon, Maple-Pecan Cinnamon Rolls, Sticky Gooey Brownies, Apple Upside Down, Cake P 1,000

April 6, Saturday, 9-12 nn THAI COOKING 1 Tom Kha Gai, Tom Yum Goong, Phad Thai Noodles, Steamed Lapu-lapu, Thai Barbecue (Chicken, Pork and Squid), Spicy Squid Salad, Flaming Seafood Curry P 1,200

April 6, Saturday or April 15, Monday 1-5 pm BASIC BAKING 1 from measuring to presentation! Chiffon Cake: Coffee Crunch Cake, Sponge Cake: Strawberry and White Chocolate Trifle, Rich Butter Cake, Pie Crust: American Apple Pie P 1,200

April 8, Monday, 1-5 pm BAKING 4 Carrot Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting, Lemon Meringue Pie, Rum Pound Cake, Tiramisu, Baklava P 1,200

April 9, Tuesday, 2-5 pm BARS and COOKIES Mississippi Mudcake Bars, Russian Tea Cookies, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Chocolate Crinkles, Lemon Squares P 1,000

April 10, Wednesday, 2-5 pm BASIC SAUCES with Chef Mauro Arjona Hollandaise, Bearnaise, Bordelaise, Chasseur, Demiglaze, Mushroom, Fish Veloute and Chaye Sauce P 1,500

April 11, Thursday, 1:30-5:30 pm COOKING and BAKING 2 Grilled Hamburger with Trimmings, Cheese Sticks, Tacos, Hot Fudge Pudding Cake a la Mode, Crepes (Sweet and Savory), Polvoron P 1,000

April 12, Friday, 2-5 pm BROWNIES GALORE Chocolate Cheesecake Brownies, Cappuccino Brownies, Kahlua Brownies, Chocolate Fudge Brownies, White Chocolate Brownies P 1,200

April 13, Saturday, 9-12nn THAI COOKING 2 Glass Noodle Salad, Bagoong Rice, Catfish Salad, Thai Kangkong, Shrimp Pancake, Century Egg Salad, Mango with Sticky Rice P 1,200

April 13, Saturday or April 22, Monday 1-5 pm BASIC BAKING 2 with Frostings & Icings Rich and Moist Devil's Food Cake with Mocha Buttercream Frosting, Apple Walnut Cake with Creamy Caramel Frosting, Chocolate Decadent Cake with Chocolate Fudge Icing & Caramel, Maple Walnut Cake with Fluffy White Frosting P 1,200

April 16, Tuesday, 1-6 pm BREAD MAKING 2 Croissants, Carrot Bread, Raisin Bread, Gruyere Garlic Bread, Banana Bread P 1,200

April 17, Wednesday, 1:30-5:30 pm MY FAVOURITE CHICKEN RECIPES 2 Chicken Florentine, Barbecued Chicken Wings, Arroz con Pollo, Chicken Teriyaki, Grilled Chicken and Shrimp on Skewers, Steak Fajitas P 1,000

April 18, Thursday, 1:30-5:30 pm COOKING and BAKING 3 Crumbly-Noodle Nest, Stuffed Giant Prawns, Lemon Chicken, Barbecued Spareribs, Siopao, Buco Pandan, Salad P 1,000

April 19, Friday, 1:30-5:30 pm BAKING 5 Ube Cake, Original Pandan Cake, Mango Cake, Strawberry Shortcake P 1,200

April 20, Saturday, 9-12nn THAI COOKING 3 Pandan Chicken, Thai Chicken Curry, Beef Curry, Khanom Chine, Papaya Salad, Green Mango Salad, Pineapple Rice, Poh Piah (Thai Springrolls) P 1,200

April 20, Saturday, 1-5 pm BAKING 3 Toblerone Cake, Cream Puff, Eclairs, Profiterole, Chocolate Mousse, Creamy Croissant and Apple Pudding, Empanadas con Camote y Pina P 1,200

April 23, Tuesday, 2-5 pm Special ITALIAN PIAZZA with Chef Mauro Arjona Cold Smoked Salmon Pizza, Pork Saltinbucca, Fettuccini with Prawns and Blue Cheese, Ossobucco, Tiramisu P 1,500

April 24, Wednesday, 1:30-4:30 pm PASTAS and MORE Homemade Pasta, Basic Tomato Sauce, Linguini Carbonara, Spaghetti Putanesca, Lasagne, Seafood Pasta, Penne a la Vodka P 1,000

April 25, Thursday, 1:30-5:30 pm SPECIAL BAKING Death by Chocolate, Mango Tango, Mango Layer Cake, Caramel Cheesecake with Nut Crust P 1,200

April 26, Friday, 1:30-5:30 pm BAKING 6 For Chocolate Lovers! French Chocolate Cake, Black Forest Cake, Churros con Chocolate, Austrian Chocolate Cake P 1,200

April 27, Saturday, 9-12nn THAI COOKING 4 Braised Crabs in Curry Sauce, Steamed Fish with Herb Soup, Savory Stir-Fried Lapu-lapu Fillet, Chicken with Sesame Seeds, Sizzling Beef, Fish Cakes P 1,200

April 27, Saturday, 2-5 pm SPECIAL COOKING Pasta with Gorgonzola Sauce, Paella Valenciana, Fish Florentine in Fillo Pastry, Bone Marrow Canapes, Crepes Samurai P 1,000

April 29, Monday, 1:30-5:30 pm BAKING 7 Croquembouche, Turtle Pie, Triple Chocolate Mousse Cake, Mango Pavlova P 1,200

April 30, Tuesday, 2-5 pm ASIAN COOKING Hainanese Chicken Rice, Vietnamese Springrolls, Gado-Gado, Claypot Chicken Rice, Peking Candied Apples P 1,000

E-mail Address:
sylvia_cancio@hotmail.com
Please call for reservation!

Heny Sison

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES
(April 25 to June 1, 2002)

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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

April 1 (Monday) 9:00-1:00 p.m. P1,500 BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS By: Heny Sison "Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing

April 1 (Monday) 2:00-5:00 p.m. P1,500 BROWNIES & BARS By: Heny Sison "Chewy Moist Brownies, Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Icing, Lemon Cheesecake Bars, Brownies with Caramel Center and Butterscotch Bars

April 2 (Tuesday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 BAKING I By: Heny Sison "Super Moist Chocolate Cake with Mocha Filing & Fudge Frosing, Crispy Sylvana, Cream Puff, Lemon Pie, Butterscotch Bars and Sables

April 3 (Wednesday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 BAKING II By: Heny Sison "Ube-Butter Cake, Sour Cream Pound Cake, Walnut Pie, Cheesecake Tart, Creme de Fruta and Ensaymada

April 4 (Thursday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 CHOCOLATE CAKE TREASURE by: Heny Sison "Decadent Chocolate Cake with Caramel Sauce, Chocolate Tiramisu, Mouth Watering Fan Torte, Cassata and Hazelnut Torte

April 5 (Friday) 9:30-4:00 p.m. P1,500 DESSERT I By: Jill Sandique, Chef / Food Consultant & Food Stylist, Blue Ribbon graduate of Peter Kump's New York Cooking School " Chocolate Almond Meringue Cake, Chocolate Crumb Cake, Carrot Apple Cake, Caramel Mousse, Mango Charlotte & Walnut Torte with Butterscotch Frosting

April 6 (Saturday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 CREPE WORKSHOP By: Jill Sandique "Learn the techniques of crepe making in this full participation class. On the menu: Crepe Suzette, Strawberry Crepe, Mango - Pandan Crepe, Crepe a la Mode, Spinach Roulade, Beggars Purses and Chicken Mushroom Crepe

April 8 - 12 (Monday-Friday) 9:00-12:00 p.m. P3,500 GUM PAST FLOWER MAKING By: Heny Sison "A unique method of making gum paste flowers using a foam pad, a pair of scissors and cutters. The course covers: the Rose, Carnation, Stephanotis, Tulips, Filler Flowers, Cattleya, Christmas Holly, Poinsettia, Daisy, Tiger Lily and Quick Leaves. Learn how to use airbrush and edible petal dust to color the flowers and bunch them into a bouquet. Full participation.

April 8 - 12 (Monday-Friday) 1:30-4:30 p.m. P5,000 ADVANCED CAKE DECORATION By: Heny Sison "The course covers: baking of fruitcake, covering it with marzipan then with rolled fondant. Learn South African and Australian methods using delicate icing wings, curtainings, ribbon insertion done on rolled fondant cake. Bonus: how to make bows, swags plus chocolate rolled fondant, quilting & cut-outs. Full participation.

April 13 (Saturday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,500 PIZZA I By: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli, Master Pizzaioli & Barista, Food Consultant of various Italian restaurant all over Metro Manila, graduated at Culinary Institute, Milan Italy " In this class you will learn the history, concept and design of pizza making. Learn how to make pizza dough, tomato base sauce, white sauce base, preparation, setting up of pizza counter, know the ingredients and toppings. Recipes: Margherita, Napoli Classica, 4 Formaggi, Pizza Vegetarian, La Gitana, Piccantina, 4 Stagioni, Calzone & Frutti di Mare. Demonstration with student participation.

April 15 (Monday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,500 FRESH PASTA By: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli, " There is simply no comparison between homemade hand-formed pasta and the store bought stuff. Homemade is what not only tastier but a lot easier to make than you think. Learn how to make pasta egg dough, green spinach dough, black pasta dough, different kinds of pastas: lasagna, green lasagna, ravioli, tortellini, cannelloni, fettuccine: green & black, stuffing's for ravioli, tortellini and cannelloni. Sauces for lasagna, tortellini, ravioli & cannelloni. Recipes: Lasagna alla Bolognese, Lasagna ai 4 Formaggi, Lasagna al Pesto, Cannelloni alla Ricotta and Spinaci, Ravioli alla Boscaiola al Burro e Salvia, Tortellini ai 4 Formaggi, alla Panna Prosciutto e Funghi, Green Fettucini alla Montanara, Black Fettuccine ai Frutti di Mare. Demonstration with student participation.

April 16 (Tuesday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 OLD-FASHIONED DESSERTS By: Heny Sison "Honey Crunch Cake, Strawberry Shortcake, Manga Cake, Sanzrival, Melt in the Mouth Mamon and Jelly Roll

April 17 (Wednesday) 9:00-12:30 p.m. P1,500 CAJUN II by: Jill Sandique " Shrimp Creole, Gumbo, Seafood Etoufee, Bourbon Chicken, Mufuletta Sandwich & Bread Pudding

April 17 (Wednesday) 1:30-4:00 p.m. P1,200 COFFEE! COFFEE! COFFEE! By: Aileen Anastacio P1,200 owner of C'est Si Bon and Goodies N' Sweets, graduate of culinary at the California Culinary Academy "If you are planning to open a coffee shop this course is for you. Learn the four fundamentals of coffee brewing, home espresso, guide to steaming & foaming. Recipes. Caffe Mocha, Caffe Americano, Caffe Latte, Cappuccino, Espresso Macchiato and Espresso con Panna. Make fun toppings and garnishes and master the art of coffee making.

April 18 (Thursday) 9:00-12:30 p.m. P1,500 CUBAN CUISINE By: Jill Sandique "Palomino Steak, Tostones, Moros y Cristianos, Fish Pudding, Roast Pork, Cuban Sandwich and Flan de Leche

April 18 (Thursday) 1:30-4:00 p.m. P1,500 THE MANY WAYS TO COOK CHICKEN II by: Aileen Anastacio "Oriental Chicken Salad, Corn & Chicken Soup, Chicken Lasagne, Chicken Kiev, Chicken Marsala & Roasted Pesto Chicken.

April 19 (Friday) 9:30-4:00 p.m. P1,750 BREAD BAKING WORKSHOP By: Jill Sandique "Brioche, Egg, Pan De Sal, Anadama Bread, Cinnamon Coffee Cake, Multigrain Bread, Pullman, American Black and Braided Loaf

April 20 (Saturday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,500 PIZZA II STUFFED PIZZA By: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli "Erbazzone (Three layers with Ricotta, Spinach, Parmesan & Vegetables), Tortellone (Stuffed Pizza with Meat, Parmesan & Besciamelle), Calzone (Napoletana, White Sauce and Chicken, Tuna Capers & Vegetarian). Learn new style of pizza with Kesong Puti, Tofu and other local ingredients Demonstration with student participation.

April 22 (Monday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,500 RISOTTI (How to Cook Rice: The Italian Way) By: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli "Risotto Alla Milanese (with Tafferano & Marrow Bone), Risotto alla Pescatora (with Seafood), Risotto ai Porcini (with Porcini Mushroom), Risotto agli Asparagi (with Asparagus), Risotto Montanaro (with Speck & Vodka), Risi e Bisi (Ham & Peas), Ris a Cagnon (with Fontina Cheese), Risotto con Scampi (with Shrimps), Arancini (Rice Balls) and Insalata di roso (Rice Salad). Demonstration with student participation.

April 23 (Tuesday) 10:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 DIMSUM I By: Katherine C. Sion, restaurateur (Ding Hao & Fat Kat restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese Cuisine. "Congee, Siomai, Dumpling, Chicken Feet, Fried Shrimp Ball & Buchi

April 24 (Wednesday) 9:30-4:00 p.m. P1,750 BREAD BAKING WORKSHOP II By: Jill Sandique "Cuban Bread, Pita, Soft Pretzel, Flour Tortilla, Naan, Poori, Baguette, Pain de Campagne and English Muffins

April 29 (Monday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,500 ZUPPA & ZUPPE!!! (Soup: Italian Way) By: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli, " Minestrone: alla Milanese, alla Genovese, alla Fiorentina, Zuppa Di Ceci (Garbanzones Soup), Sopa E Fasol (Beans Soup), Zuppa Di Pesce Alla Livornese, Fish Soup Leghorn Style, Trippa Alla Milanese (Tripe in Milanese Way), Light Soup Tortellini in Brodo, Ris e Erburin (Parsley Soup with Rice). Demonstration with student participation.

April 30 (Tuesday) 9:30-3:00 p.m. P1,200 CHILDREN COOKING By: Jill Sandique "Baked Chicken Drumsticks with Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Cheese Pimiento Pinwheels, Ice Cream Sundae with Homemade Butterscotch and Hot Fudge

Heny Sison at Julius Maggi Kitchen Nestle Bldg. #31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City

April 15 (Monday) 1:00-5:00 p.m. P1,500 SPECIAL CAKES "Coffee Crunch, Tiramisu, Black Forest Cake, Nelusco, Mocha Cake with Mocha Filing & Icing, Rum Walnut Cake

April 26 (Friday) 1:00-5:00 p.m. P1,500 BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS "Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing

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Estrada's public defenders also want out of case

STORY ON PAGE A2

Big business believes Erap is a 'spent force'

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

BIG business is convinced that while Joseph Estrada is a "spent force," his trial is still a test case for President Macapagal-Arroyo's political will.

Analyst Peter Wallace voiced the opinions of some of the country's big businesses during the Wallace Business

BIG/A7

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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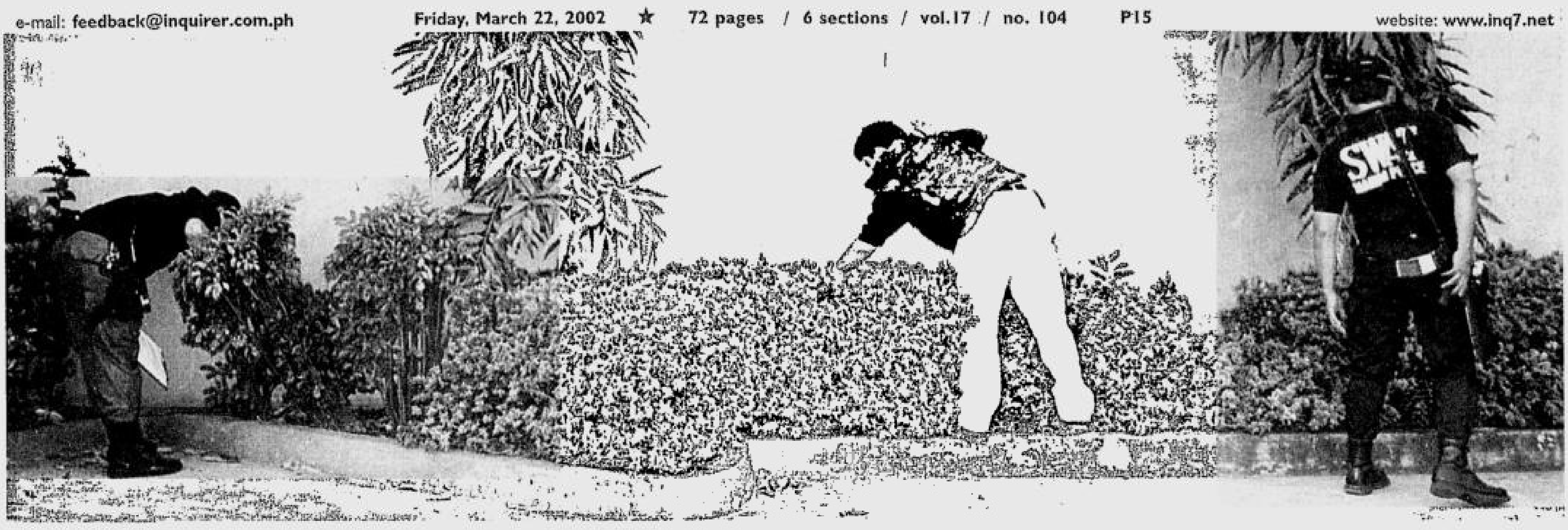


SUDDENLY, Metro Manila morphs into an urban jungle as bombs are found in highly populated areas like the Metrobank branch on Taft Avenue corner Nakpil Street in Manila. The Western Police District bomb disposal team combs the hedges in the area for other suspicious objects.

ERIK ARAZAS

4 more bombs found

Suspects include NPA, MILF, government elements

By Philip C. Tubeza and Agnes Donato, *in Manila*
Aquiles Z. Zonio and Edwin O. Fernandez, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

FOR the third straight day, bombs were discovered in Manila and Caloocan City yesterday, bringing to seven the number of explosives found in the metropolis since Monday night.

The bomb scare spread to Cotabato City after police discovered two improvised bombs planted separately in the commercial district and in the public market.

As in the previous bombs, manifestos from the Indigenous People's Federal Army (Ipfa) were found beside the "bomb" in front of the Metrobank branch on Taft Avenue and J. Nakpil Street in Malate and one inside a jeepney parked in front of the Prudential Bank near the Bonifacio Circle in Monumento.

Ipfa is calling for a federal form of government.

Police said the bombs were not meant to explode but to send a political signal. "It seems the planting of the device is the actual terrorism. The components are incomplete. The recovered devices could not detonate by themselves," said Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr., Western Police District director.

The "bomb" in Manila consisted of a 40-mm cartridge, a rifle grenade, a soda can with a blue powder, a 1.5 AA battery, and a terminal connector with strands of electrical wires.

"There was no initiator and device (needed to) trigger an explosion," said Insp. Lorenzo B. Molato, head of the

4 MORE/A21

RP studying US-proposed multi-nation war games

By Carlito Pablo

NATIONAL Security Adviser Roilo Golez yesterday said the government was studying what "framework" to use for the US-proposed "Team Challenge," a planned merger of the RP-US Balikatan 02-2 with a larger military exercise involving several other countries.

Golez described the proposed multinational exercise, which Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes disclosed Wednesday, as "a possibility and a good measure to promote regional harmony."

But another administration official, who requested anonymity, said Muslim countries like Malaysia and Indonesia were "not too keen on joining such an exercise because it could offend their constituencies."

"They are careful to appear as not so cooperative with the Americans even if such an exercise is not even directed against international terrorism," the official said.

It was a reference to the general resentment of Muslims worldwide against the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan, which came as a result of the Sept. 11 terror attacks on US soil.

The official admitted that it was "not clear" how the Philippine government could rationalize Team Challenge.

According to the official, the United States is pushing for a multinational

RP/A20

Authorities clueless on men behind bomb scare

By Fe Zamora, *INQ7.net,*
TJ Burgonio and Christine Avendaño

WHO is behind the bomb scare in Metro Manila?

Is it a Moro secessionist group, a breakaway communist faction, or both? Is it elements from the government?

Investigators are at a loss.

With legislators, probers can only speculate on the people behind the obscure Indigenous People's Federal Army (Ipfa), which has claimed responsibility for the planting of what seemed like homemade bombs in the metropolis.

At least two theories have surfaced, but so far, the "profile" of the perpetrators remained vague to the National Anti-Crime Commission (NACC) which met Wednesday night to assess the Ipfa.

"It could be just any group with grandiose dreams, like the H World Army. Or, it could be a spin or prelude to the May 1 anniversary," the INQ7.net source, who was at the NACC meeting, said.

The NACC is headed by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez. Among its members are National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, Interior Secretary Joey Lina and the heads of the law enforcement agencies.

AUTHORITIES/A20

JULIE ALIPALA/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

THE FOREST PRIMEVAL

And Jahira Hamid, 65, of the Subanon tribe says she's willing to risk everything to save it from the incursions of mindless development, for this virgin land is her ancestral home in Barangay Limpapa, Zamboanga del Norte.

US medics help rescue 7 wounded RP soldiers

ISABELA, Basilan—US military paramedics yesterday helped evacuate seven Filipino soldiers who were wounded in a mid-morning clash with Abu Sayyaf bandits in the Upper Mangas area.

Reporters also saw a US Army Humvee jeep with five heavily armed US Special Forces troops speeding out of the 103rd Philippine Army Brigade headquarters at noon as fighting raged near the town of Lantawan.

But Capt. Noel Detoyato, Southern Command spokesperson, insisted the US soldiers did not take part in the clash at the coconut-growing villages of Bolansa and Tairan.

"They (US troops) responded when the operating (Filipino) troops sought assistance, but there were no Americans involved in the encounter," Detoyato said.

Army Col. Jessie Dellosa said about 60 members of the 10th and 12th Scout Ranger Companies ran into about 20 Abu Sayyaf bandits at about 10 a.m., triggering heavy fighting that continued into the afternoon.

Detoyato said two American paramedics took off with several of their Filipino counterparts aboard two Philippine Air Force UH-1H helicopters for the medical evacuation mission.

One of the Hueys first extricated three wounded soldiers, while a second

US/A20

PASSPORTS MESS

DFA accused of creating artificial shortage

By Christine Herrera and Armand Nocum

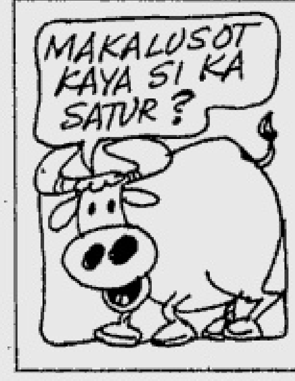
AN ALLIANCE of overseas contract workers accused the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday of creating an "artificial shortage" in new passports, to justify a forthcoming increase in processing fees and to pave the way for privatizing the printing of passports.

Migrante International said the DFA planned to increase the fee from P650 to P1,500 per passport and to push through with the privatization scheme.

"The DFA is creating an artificial shortage to precondition the mind of the public to accept any increase in processing fees that it will impose," said Poe Gratela, the group's secretary general.

The department earlier said that the stock of new passports was running critically low, to an estimated 350,000 pieces—just enough to meet demand for the next 40 days. At present, the

DFA/A20


MAKALUSOT KAYA SI KA SATUR?

Satur going to America ... if he gets a US visa

By Christine Avendaño

GUESS who's going to Washington? Or not.

One of the most vocal critics of American military presence in the Philippines has been invited to a series of speaking engagements in the United States next month, but whether the US Embassy will give Bayan Muna party-list

SATUR/A7

Second FRONT PAGE

TATAGAL PA NGA!

Erap's public defenders want out

More delays seen in trial as court-appointed lawyers ask to be relieved

By Volt Contreras

THE MUDDLED trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada may be in for further delays after all his court-appointed lawyers, both public and private, asked to be relieved.

The Public Attorneys Office yesterday joined the four court-appointed private lawyers in asking the Sandiganbayan to reappoint Estrada's original defense team—which he had dismissed on Feb. 27—to represent him anew.

The new PAO pleading was actually a reiteration of its motion last week, which said that Estrada was a non-indigent who did not qualify for PAO's services, and that PAO does not normally collaborate with private lawyers.

That motion was denied by the court on March 15.

The special division handling Estrada's cases will hear PAO's latest motion at 9 a.m. today, as well as similar pleadings made earlier this week by private lawyers Rodolfo Jimenez and Mario Ongkiko.

Estrada's presence will not be required at today's deliberations.

Asked if the court could recall Estrada's original defense team as de officio counsel, Sandiganbayan spokesperson Renato Bocar said, "It's possible but impractical."

This is because Estrada could just dismiss the lawyers all over again, he said.

In earlier pleadings, Jimenez said he was declining his appointment mainly because he found it "anomalous" working with members of the PAO, which is under the Department of Justice.

The DOJ is responsible for the prosecution of Estrada.

Ongkiko's arguments, meanwhile, centered around Estrada's refusal to cooperate with any court-appointed counsel. Ongkiko was also the first to float the idea of having Estrada's de parte (or chosen) lawyers reappointed albeit on de officio status.

Ongkiko's position was adopted by the other court-appointed private lawyers—Prospero Crescini, Manuel Pamaran and Irene Jurado—in a supplemental motion filed late Wednesday.

One of Estrada's original lawyers, Rene Saguisag, pointed out yesterday that "the fact is the Estradas don't want us to represent them anymore, so the dilemma of the de officio counsel would just be moved to us."

But Arturo Temanil, one of the four PAO lawyers tapped to defend Estrada, said the court could reappoint Estrada's de parte counsel since they are active members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and are officers of the court.

"They (original lawyers) cannot refuse if the court so orders," added PAO chief Persida Acosta.

Crescini said he and his colleagues were still willing to take Estrada's cases, "only if he would cooperate. But how can we defend him if he doesn't even want to be interviewed (by us)?"

Crescini also said he would not be able to cope with the three hearings per week schedule set by the Sandiganbayan when the trial resumes on April 12.

Yesterday, the Sandiganbayan issued a resolution directing Saguisag to stop filing manifestations with regard to the Estrada cases, since he is no longer "one of the parties in these cases nor is he one of the lawyers."

Saguisag has apparently still been writing the court—sometimes just to react to media accounts of the cases—even after he and eight other private lawyers were fired by Estrada last month.

The court's patience was finally broken by a March 16 manifestation from Saguisag, which was "without even a prayer as to what it wants," the court said.

The court resolved to "expunge" the manifestation from its records and have it "returned to said RAV Saguisag with a directive to him not to submit anymore pleadings in these cases."

Also yesterday, two congressmen said they support live media coverage of the Estrada trial.

The Department of Justice is poised to ask the Supreme Court once again to allow live coverage of the former president's trial.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said, "I am for anything that is for a fair trial. It's a good move."

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said live coverage of the trial would allow the people to see if Estrada was getting a fair trial.

He said live coverage would also challenge the prosecution and defense panels to do their jobs well.

It would also put pressure on the Sandiganbayan to expedite the cases, Ocampo said. ***With Christine O. Avendaño***

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Shut up on Mark Jimenez, Ani told

By Rocky Nazareno and Jerome Aning

OMBUDSMAN Aniano Desierto should "learn to keep his mouth shut" and not meddle in the extradition case of Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

In a scathing statement, Sen. Joker Arroyo reacted sharply yesterday to Desierto's "open, unsolicited and uncalled for advise" to Jimenez to testify against former President Joseph Estrada in order to delay his extradition to the United States where he is wanted on four charges.

"Our treaty obligations (to the US) are not the concern of the Ombudsman. His concern is to investigate and prosecute grafters," Arroyo said.

In recommending that Jimenez testify, Desierto had said the "interest of the Philippine justice system must first be served before we honor our international commitments."

Arroyo also called "a lot of crap" Desierto's claim that the government needs Jimenez to secure a conviction of Estrada on plunder charges.

"The government has a pileful of evidence to convict the former President. It doesn't need Jimenez and that is why Estrada is hell-bent on derailing his trial," Arroyo said, referring to Estrada's recent firing of his lawyers and attacks on the judiciary.

Arroyo raised the possibility of a scenario where Estrada, Jimenez and another wanted Estrada crony, Charlie "Atong" Ang, could all go scot-free.

The Philippines is seeking the extradition of Ang from the US so he could face trial along with Estrada. Suppose that Estrada is allowed to go on medical leave abroad then refuses to return to the Philippines.

Arroyo said that in such a scenario, "all three would be saved because the US will not release Ang to the Philippines without getting Jimenez, and Estrada will be free while in the US."

And with the Holy Week approaching, a militant non governmental organization pushing for Jimenez's extradition said yesterday Desierto should not make Jimenez out to be Judas to Estrada's Jesus Christ, in apparent reference to the formerly close association of the two.

The People's Organization for the Preservation of Laws and Ethical Standards (Peoples) said Desierto's suggestion to Jimenez to testify against Estrada was nothing but "a desperate attempt" to delay his extradition.

"Why should Jimenez play Judas to his friend Erap?" Peoples spokesperson Lulu del Rosario asked.

Kawit rites to honor Aguinaldo

GEN. Emilio Aguinaldo, the first president of the republic, will be honored on his 133rd birthday today at the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite.

Leading the commemorative activities are the National Historical Institute (NHI); the municipal government of Kawit; Asociacion de los Veteranos de la Revolucion; the Association of Schools in Kawit and descendants of Aguinaldo, Holy Mass will be officiated by Rev. Fr. Luciano R. Paguiligan, parish priest of Sta. Maria Magdalena Church. Wreath-lying and flag-raising ceremonies and a short commemorative program follows immediately.

Vice Gov. Jonvic Remulla will lead the flag-raising rites and deliver a short message. He will be joined by Kawit Mayor Federico Poblete and Dr. Pablo Trillana III of the NHI.

THE PAIN SOCIETY HOLDS CONVENTION IN CEBU

The Pain Society of the Philippines (PSP) will hold its 10th Annual Convention this March 25-26, 2002 at Maribago Bluewater Beach Resort, Mactan, Cebu. This is a multidisciplinary medical society under the International Association for the Study of Pain.

PSP president Francis O. Javier, MD announced that a basic science refresher course II would also be held on March 24, 2002 as a prelude to the convention. This will be chaired by Prof. Benigno M. Sulit Jr. It is open to all for a minimal fee.

The convention theme is "Pain: Rated X (eXtremes of age; eXtremely painful conditions). Keynote Speaker is Lapu-Lapu City Mayor Arturo O. Radaza.

Various topics in pain will be tackled by local and foreign speakers. Foreign Speakers who will be talking for the convention are: Prof. Bianchi (Italy), Prof. Grond (Germany) and Dr. David Scott (Australia).

A fellowship night will be held at the Alegardo Island, Maribago Bluewater Beach Resort, Mactan, Cebu with the theme, "1521, Cebu".

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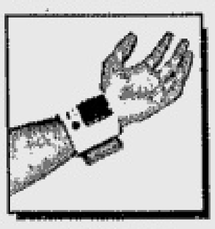

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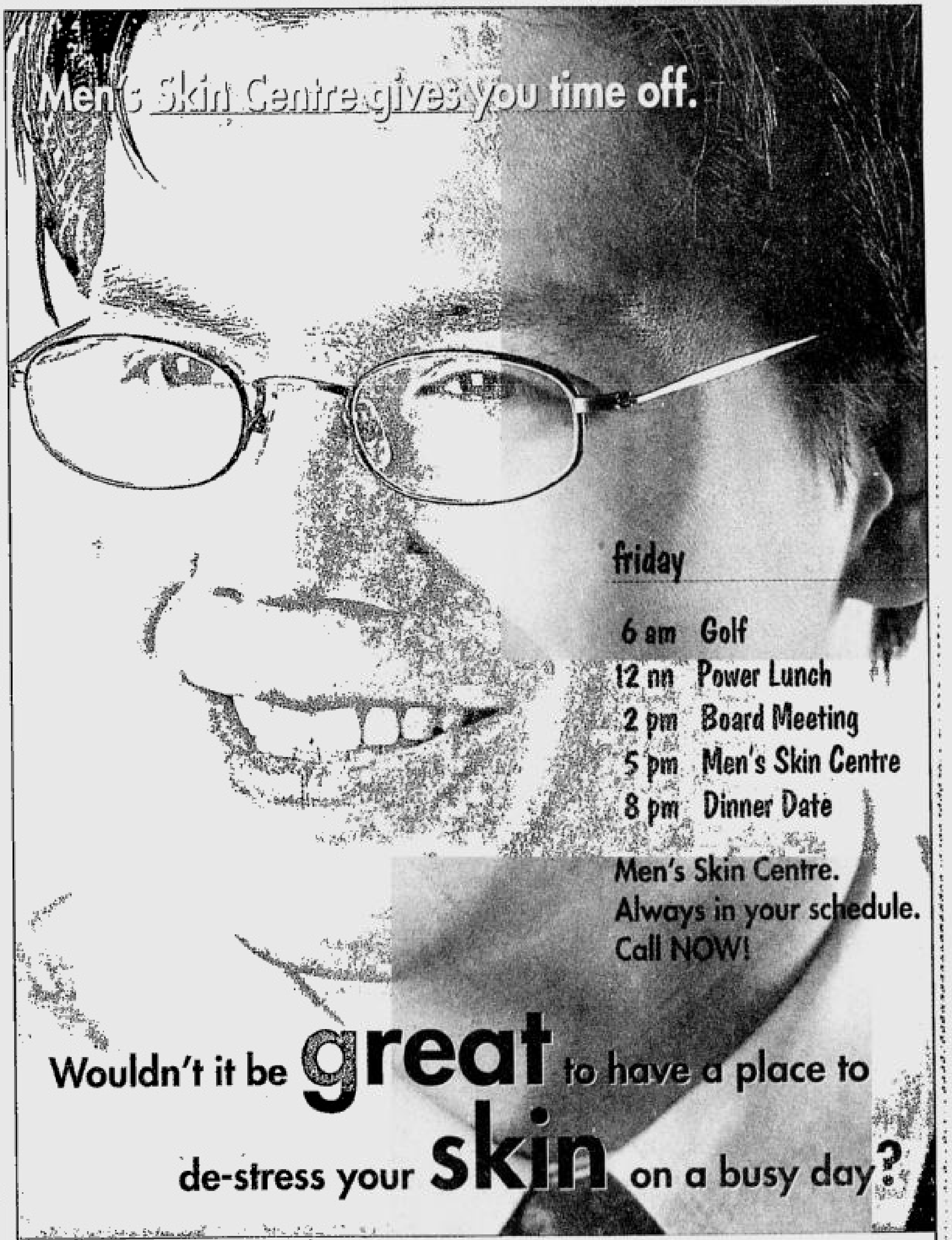
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Indon militants demand release of terror suspects in RP

JAKARTA—Some 100 members of two Indonesian hardline Muslim groups on Thursday staged a noisy protest outside the Philippine Embassy demanding Manila release three Indonesians held on suspicion of terrorism.

"We want Muslim activists held in the Philippines to be freed," said one protestor, describing the arrests as a "conspiracy" against Indonesian Muslims.

Dozens of policemen stood outside the embassy but did not try to disperse the protestors, from the Front for the Defenders of Islam and the Mujahedin Army.

"Philippines: American agent in Southeast Asia," read a big banner held by two women. "Militancy: yes, terrorism: no," said another.

The three Indonesians—Agus Dwikarna, Tamsil Linrung and Abdul Jammal Balsas—were arrested at Manila airport last week. They have been jointly charged with illegal possession of explosives.

A senior Philippine police official said in Manila Thursday that all three had reportedly met with associates of Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, another Indonesian who is linked to a string of bombings in Manila on Dec. 30, 2000 that left more than a dozen people dead.

Al-Ghozi, who was arrested by Philippine police in January, has allegedly admitted being a bomb expert working for Jemaah Islamiyah, an outfit touted as the Southeast Asian wing of Saudi militant Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Dwikarna has also admitted membership of Jemaah Islamiyah while the two others claimed they came to the Philippines to establish contacts for possible coal and tuna fish investment ventures, the Philippine police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Dwirkana is a coordinator for Laskar Jundullah (The Army of God), a militant Muslim group advocating the imposition of Islamic sharia law in Indonesia.

Linrung, who has a chain of restaurants and other businesses, is a member of the advisory board of the Committee for the Preparation of the Enforcement of Islamic Sharia.

He was also treasurer of the National Mandate Party, led by national assembly speaker Amien Rais, until his resignation on Jan. 31. *AFP*

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Indon militants demand release of terror suspects in RP

JAKARTA—Some 100 members of two Indonesian hardline Muslim groups on Thursday staged a noisy protest outside the Philippine Embassy demanding Manila release three Indonesians held on suspicion of terrorism.

"We want Muslim activists held in the Philippines to be freed," said one protestor, describing the arrests as a "conspiracy" against Indonesian Muslims.

Dozens of policemen stood outside the embassy but did not try to disperse the protestors, from the Front for the Defenders of Islam and the Mujahedin Army.

"Philippines: American agent in Southeast Asia," read a big banner held by two women. "Militancy: yes, terrorism: no," said another.

The three Indonesians—Agus Dwikarna, Tamsil Linrung and Abdul Jammal Balsas—were arrested at Manila airport last week. They have been jointly charged with illegal possession of explosives.

A senior Philippine police official said in Manila Thursday that all three had reportedly met with associates of Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, another Indonesian who is linked to a string of bombings in Manila on Dec. 30, 2000 that left more than a dozen people dead.

Al-Ghozi, who was arrested by Philippine police in January, has allegedly admitted being a bomb expert working for Jemaah Islamiyah, an outfit touted as the Southeast Asian wing of Saudi militant Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Dwikarna has also admitted membership of Jemaah Islamiyah while the two others claimed they came to the Philippines to establish contacts for possible coal and tuna fish investment ventures, the Philippine police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Dwirkana is a coordinator for Laskar Jundullah (The Army of God), a militant Muslim group advocating the imposition of Islamic sharia law in Indonesia.

Linrung, who has a chain of restaurants and other businesses, is a member of the advisory board of the Committee for the Preparation of the Enforcement of Islamic Sharia.

He was also treasurer of the National Mandate Party, led by national assembly speaker Amien Rais, until his resignation on Jan. 31. *AFP*

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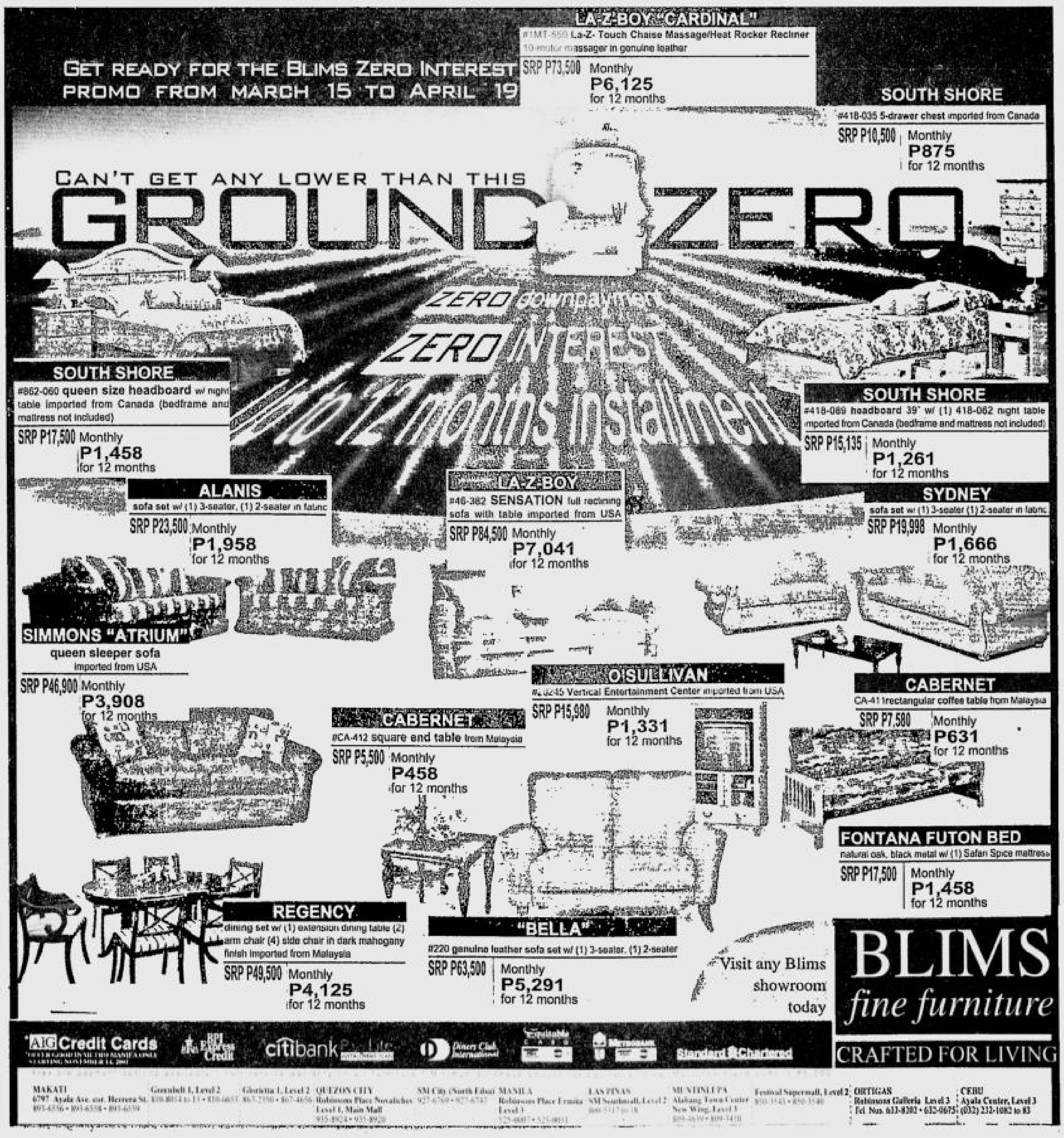
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CBCP: Senators gave 'silly solutions' to crime

By Armand N. Nocum

"SILLY solutions."

This was how a commission of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines described the proposal of Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada to castrate those convicted of rape and child molestation.

CBCP's Commission on Prison Pastoral Care (ECPPC) has the same words for Sen. Robert Barber's insistence on the government to seriously apply the Death Penalty Law.

"The two senator's outburst is very lamentable and their proposals utterly pathetic and an over reaction that is prompted by the desire to get even with the perpetrators of the crime," said Rodolfo Diamante, ECPPC executive secretary.

"The motivation is still vengeance and not the restoration of order in society, for it does not address the root (cause) of criminal acts, which is primarily the oppressive social structure and practices," he added.

He reiterated CBCP's stand that "it is not the severity of punishment that deters the commission of crime but the certainty of arrest, prosecution and conviction."

He noted that although Leo Echegaray has been put to death, incestuous or similar forms of rape have not stopped.

The ECPPC asked society, the government and lawmakers "not to commit the violence that we ourselves abhor."

"The state is even more amiss in its duties and a derelict if it is the perpetrator of violence..." he said. "It will do well for the two legislators to start thinking seriously on the root causes of criminality and stop providing quick fix and silly solutions to our problems."

Agri goes hi-tech with ₱73-M system

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

TELECONFERENCING will soon be the favored mode of communication within the Department of Agriculture once a P73 million Japanese-built national information network becomes operational in August.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor said the network will allow agriculture officials, bureau directors and heads of 17 attached agencies nationwide to be interconnected through a state-of-the-art telecom system that has video-teleconferencing capabilities.

The system will be put up by the Sumitomo Corp., a large Japanese industrial conglomerate.

Sumitomo will install a private communication network for the department independent of carriers like PLDT or Bayantel, which will link the Montemayor's office directly with the offices of 14 regional field units spread across the country.

Personal earth stations will also be put up in two remote sites—at the Philippine Rice Research Institute (Philrice) in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija and UP Los Baños, Laguna, which will then be hooked up with the Secretary's Office in Quezon City and other field units through a satellite.

The Philrice remote site will be wired with the Philippine Carabao Center and Bureau of Post Harvest, Research and Extension in Muñoz while the remote site in UPLB with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Agriculture, PCCARD, and the National Crop Protection Center via the microwave antenna.

Sumitomo will also install hotlines, telecom and video equipment at the central office and its regional field units and the two remote sites, which will interconnect the entire department.

"This hi-tech information network will greatly improve DA's work efficiency and result to better delivery of services as it will allow officials to confer among themselves right in their respective offices and arrive at crucial decisions without spending so much time on travel," Montemayor said.

Gloria wants computer tax scrapped

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho to study the feasibility of removing all taxes and duties on computers.

The move will allow the country to crash the so-called "digital divide" by affording more Filipinos access to lower-priced computers.

In a speech at the Wallace Business Forum held in Malacañang, President Macapagal said this in turn will "speed up people access to information technology."

President Macapagal said the field of information and communications technology (ICT) was one of the growth sectors her administration had identified early on.

"We are promoting fast-growing industries where high-value jobs are most plentiful. One of them is information and communications technology," Ms Macapagal said.

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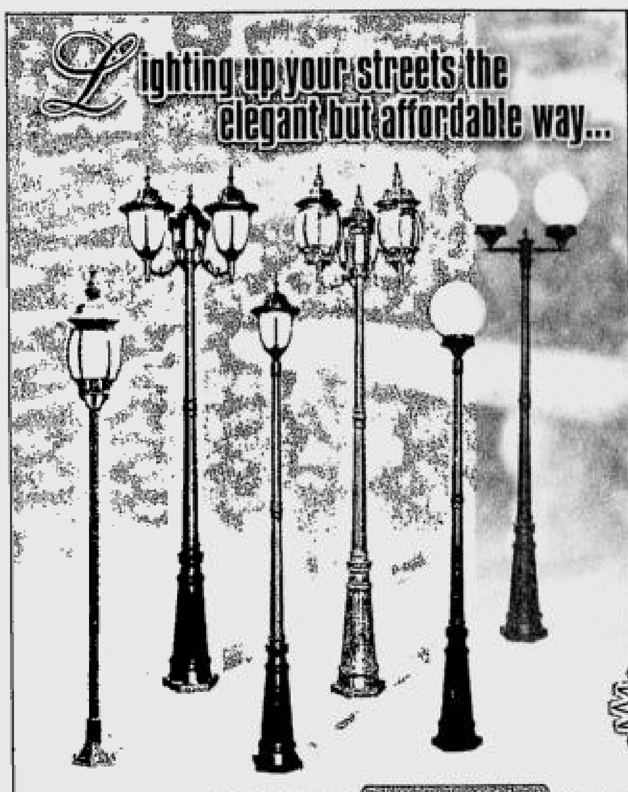

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Lawyers group backs SC, wants impeach rap junked

By Michael Lim Ubac *in Manila*
and Joey A. Gabieta,
in PDI Visayas Bureau

THE INTEGRATED Bar of the Philippines yesterday asked members of Congress to junk the impeachment complaint filed against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and the entire Supreme Court.

IBP national president Teofilo S. Pilando Jr. said the move to impeach Davide and all 13 incumbent associate justices was uncalled for.

"The IBP believes the impeachment complaint and the unwarranted criticism hurled against the Supreme Court are unfortunate attempts to ride on the controversial issues raised by former President Joseph Estrada against the integrity of the judiciary," said Pilando in a one-page statement to the INQUIRER.

The IBP said giving due course to the complaint filed with the House by Crispin T. Reyes of the Anti-Graft League of the Philippines would further distract Congress from more pressing tasks.

"Now more than ever, our country, already ravaged by problems on several fronts, must unite and face immediate serious concerns, among which are poverty and crime," said Pilando.

"While we recognize the right of every citizen to redress of grievance against any branch of government, we nevertheless deplore the abuse of such a right," Pilando said.

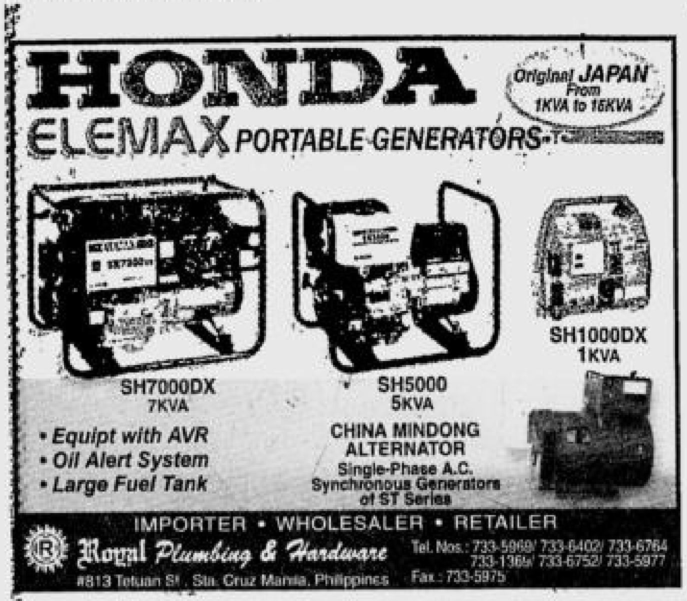
He said the 40,000-strong IBP "stands solidly behind the Supreme Court, the judicial institutions and processes."

The IBP issued the statement after Reyes filed his complaint with the House. The complaint remains unverified, however, because no solon has endorsed it.

Reyes asked the House minority to endorse the complaint impeaching the entire court for alleged culpable violation of the Constitution when the court legalized the assumption to the presidency of Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo in March last year.

DND VISITOR

Defense Secretary Angelo T. Reyes exchanges pleasantries with Philippine Ambassador to the United States Alberto del Rosario and Lt. Gen. Torue H. Walters Jr. USAF, Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) during the latter's courtesy call at the Department of National Defense at Camp Aguinaldo recently.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MERCANTILE LAW (CORPORATION LAW)—Valid transfer of shares of stock—For a valid transfer of stock, there must be strict compliance with the mode of transfer prescribed by law. The requirements are: (a) There must be delivery of the stock certificate; (b) The certificate must be endorsed by the owner or his attorney-in-fact of other persons legally authorized to make the transfer; and (c) To be valid against third parties, the transfer must be recorded in the books of the corporation. As it is, compliance with any of these requisites has not been clearly and sufficiently shown. Petitioners argue that by virtue of the Deed of Assignment, private respondents had relinquished to them any and all rights they may have had as stockholders of the Bank. While it may be true that there was an assignment of private respondents' shares to the petitioners, said assignment was not sufficient to effect the transfer of shares since there was no endorsement of the certificates of stock by the owners, their attorneys-in-fact or any other person legally authorized to make the transfer. Moreover, petitioners admit that the assignment of shares was not coupled with delivery, the absence of which a fatal defect. The rule is that the delivery of the stock certificate duly endorsed by the owner is the operative act of transfer of shares from the lawful owner to the transferee. Thus, title may be vested in the transferee only by delivery of the duly indorsed certificate of stock. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Rural Bank of Lipa City, Inc. v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 124535, September 28, 2001]

DIGEST BY **R.B. VERA**

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 22, 2002
5th Week of Lent
1st Reading: **Jer 20:10-13**
Gospel: **Jn 10:31-42**

The Jews picked up stones to throw at Jesus; so he said, "I have openly done many good works among you which the Father gave me to do. For which of these do you stone me?"

The Jews answered, "We are not stoning you for doing a good work but for insulting God; you are only a man and you make yourself God."

Then Jesus replied, "Is this not written in your Law: I said: you are gods? So those who received this word of God were called gods and the Scripture is always true. Then what should be said of the one anointed and sent into the world by the Father? Am I insulting God when I say: 'I am the Son of God'?

If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I do them, even if you have no faith in me, believe because of the works I do, and know that the Father is in me and I in the Father."

Again they tried to arrest him, but Jesus escaped from their hands. He went away again to the other side of the Jordan, to the place where John had baptized, and there he stayed.

Many people came to him and said, "John showed no miraculous signs, but he spoke of this man and everything he said was true." And many became believers in that place.

Commentary

More of John's Christology: before Holy Week begins, we are left in no doubt about who is this Jesus who will pass through Calvary to Easter for us, and we are challenged to believe in him. Jesus has just said, "The Father and I are one," and so "the Jews"—meaning the unbelievers—want to stone him as a blasphemer: "You make yourself God." John's gospel is saying, "Yes. Jesus does make this claim. We cannot back down on this. Christ, God's anointed one, sent into the world by the Father, is of one being with the Father."

To prepare well for Holy Week, read the prologue of St. John's gospel (Jn 1:1-18) and contemplate the mystery of who is Jesus Christ and why he has come into the world. You will not find it better said anywhere.

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Cabinet men will soon OK P50-M deals

By Dona Pazzibugan

CABINET members can soon approve contracts worth P50 million and above, which are previously approved solely by the National Economic Development Authority.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced she will authorize Cabinet members to approve such contracts to expedite the process.

Last year she devolved the final approval authority from the Office of the President to the Neda board.

"(I did so) to remove a source of graft in Malacañang," she told some 200 foreign business executives who attended the Wallace Business Forum held in Malacañang yesterday.

During the previous administration, contracts worth P50 million and above are reviewed and approved by the Office of the President.

Former President Joseph Estrada had said he and four other officials comprised the review committee, namely former executive secretary Ronaldo Zamora, finance secretary Jose Pardo, Neda chief Felipe Medalla and Presidential Management Staff head Leonora de Jesus.

"Backed up by my Cabinet, we are further devolving this approval process to the Cabinet secretaries, except for the types of contracts required by law to be approved at a level higher than the department head," Ms Macapagal said.

She added that her government is resolved to curb graft and corruption, one of the key concerns voiced out by the delegates yesterday.

"We must exorcise the culture of corruption that delays the maturation of our democracy," she said.

She said she will implement a "philosophy of transparency" throughout the bureaucracy to lessen corruption.

It's the same old Benipayo'

"REAPPOINTING him does not mean it's a new Benipayo who was reappointed."

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. said this of Alfredo Benipayo whom President Macapagal-Arroyo reappointed chair of the divided Commission on Elections.

The President renewed her appointment after Benipayo was bypassed by the Commission on Appointments.

Pichay, chair of the House defense committee, said the President's renewed confidence in Benipayo would not deter him from opposing the Comelec chief's confirmation before the powerful CA which is composed of senators and congressmen.

"It is the President's prerogative to reappoint him but I will continue to object to his confirmation because I believe it is good for the country if he is not the head of the Comelec," Pichay said.

Pichay said that Benipayo "lacks leadership and cannot restore public trust" in the Comelec's capability to conduct honest and clean elections.

Pichay had filed a formal affidavit of opposition to Benipayo's confirmation, citing the unresolved intramurals in the commission.

Reyes, 56

ARMANDO S. Reyes of Navotas, Cardona, Rizal and Davao died last Monday at the age of 56.

He is survived by his wife, Gondelina; children Ardel, Arlene, Armilyn and Dodong; mother Cayetana; brothers Eduardo, Julito, Narciso, Albert; sisters Isabel and Adorina.

His body lies at the family residence at Phase 1 Lot 4 Lougemmar Village, Airport Drive, Sasa, Davao City.

Interment will be on Monday at the Buhangin Memorial Park after the 1 p.m. Mass.

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Big business believes Erap is a 'spent force'

From page A1

Forum, which was held in Malacañang yesterday with 200 executives of multinational firms in attendance.

He said the business community's attitude was one of "guarded optimism," but that it expected the government to address the problems of kidnapping, corruption, inadequate infrastructure and unchecked population growth.

He also said kidnapping had become "a very serious problem" that required immediate attention.

"We believe Estrada is a spent force," Wallace declared. "But (he) must be tried and judgment rendered before any accommodations can be made, including any trip to the United States."

Wallace described Estrada's trial for plunder as a test of the country's judicial system and of the President's will to enforce the law, and warned that "if he is allowed to escape, the Philippines is headed for serious trouble."

A survey of executives of 38 firms resulted in 73 percent saying that the ousted President should not be allowed to seek medical treatment in the United States, Wallace said.

A total of 79 percent disagreed with Estrada's claim that he was being treated unfairly by the courts.

To the question of whether Estrada still had the "potential to create a destabilizing impact," 55 percent said yes while 26 percent said no.

Wallace said in an interview thar businessmen were not bothered by Estrada's tirades against the courts.

"What they're dealing with is a man (acting) very irrationally . . ." Wallace said. "We don't mind him anymore. I don't know why you do."

Approval

Wallace also said the business community generally approved of Ms Macapagal after a year in office.

In the same survey, 75 percent said the President was "performing reasonably well under the circumstances." Eleven percent said she was "doing an excellent job," but 13 percent said she was "not meeting expectations."

Wallace said the President's high approval ratings according to Pulse Asia and the fizzled-out pro-Estrada rally last March 15 were signs that the public had shifted its attention from the ousted leader.

"We're already seeing that much less attention is given to the former President," he said.

But he warned Ms Macapagal against "civil society," the moving force of People Power II.

He said civil society had become "a force to reckon with" since it supported her during the May 1 siege of Malacañang by Estrada supporters.

"But they are anti-globalization, anti-business (and) anti-reform, which could lead to problems if not properly handled," Wallace said.

Cutting costs, risks

Addressing the assembly around noon, the President said her administration would "work hard to reduce the costs and the risks of doing business in the country."

She said she would continue with reforms to attract investments and create jobs.

"Let me take this opportunity to assure you that we have our noses to the wheel, so to speak," she said. "Despite the characteristic noises generated in the political sphere, our economic managers are keeping a tight focus on the reforms that need to be undertaken."

Secretaries Jose Isidro Camacho (finance), Mar Roxas II (trade), Vincent Perez Jr. (energy), Simeon Datumanong (public works) and Patricia Sto. Tomas (labor) as well as Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura also gave presentations during the forum.

Satur going . . .

From page A1

Rep. Satur Ocampo a visa remains an open question.

Ocampo told the INQUIRER yesterday that a government source had informed him that he might have a problem getting a visa.

According to the source Ocampo did not identify, his name was included in a US list of terrorists.

He said he also found out that his papers had been sent to the US Department of State for clearance.

Ocampo, a political prisoner for 12 years during the Marcos regime, once served as spokesperson for the leftist National Democratic Front.

He bristled at being categorized as a terrorist. "I am an elected representative. I was not convicted of anything," he said in a phone interview. He noted that Bayan Muna even topped the party-list election last year.

If his application is denied, Ocampo will join fellow Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran in the reject list. Last October, Beltran's chief of staff, Rudy Corro Jr., decried the US state department's treatment of Beltran as "persona non grata" because of what Corro said was his "strong anti-US interventionist policy activism."

"The US Embassy . . . has consistently been refusing to give Representative Beltran a travel visa since 1986, when he first applied for one after he surfaced from two years in hiding because of martial law," Corro said then.

Last December, the US Embassy found itself in hot water after canceling the 10-year visa of Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada, ostensibly because of a system error.

In the end, the embassy apologized to Lozada, the chair of the House committee on foreign affairs, and issued him a new visa.

Lozada was the appointments secretary of then-President Fidel V. Ramos.

Speaking tour

Ocampo said he had been invited by the Berkley, California-based RP-US Federation of Chambers of Commerce for a "speaking tour" in the United States from April 12 to 20.

He said the group invited him to speak on Bayan Muna's position on three key issues: absentee voting, dual citizenship and the plight of war veterans.

He added that he expected to speak also in New York and Washington functions next month. He said he sought the requisite travel authority from Speaker Jose de Venecia.

The House of Representatives sent his papers to the US Embassy, but feedback was expected in two weeks' time, he said.

It was only when the INQUIRER asked him if he had scheduled any trips abroad, now that Congress had gone on a month-long break, that Ocampo talked about the possible problems with his visa.

If he does get one, it will be his first time to visit the United States.

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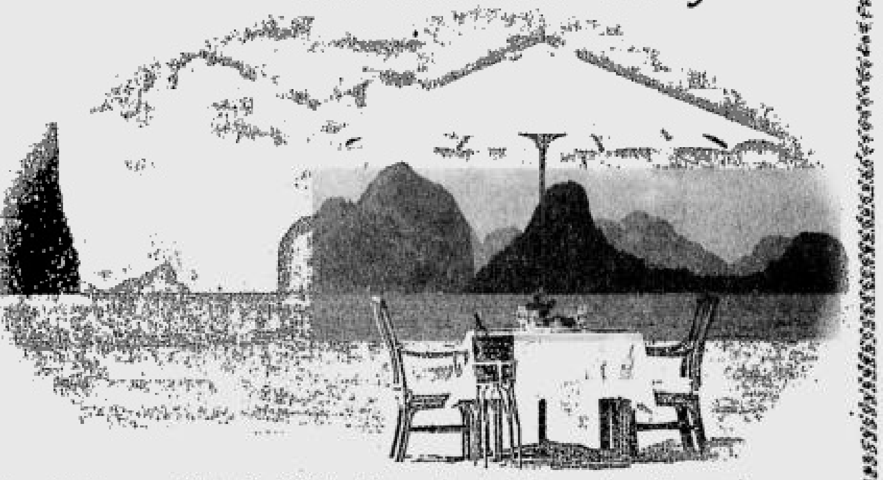

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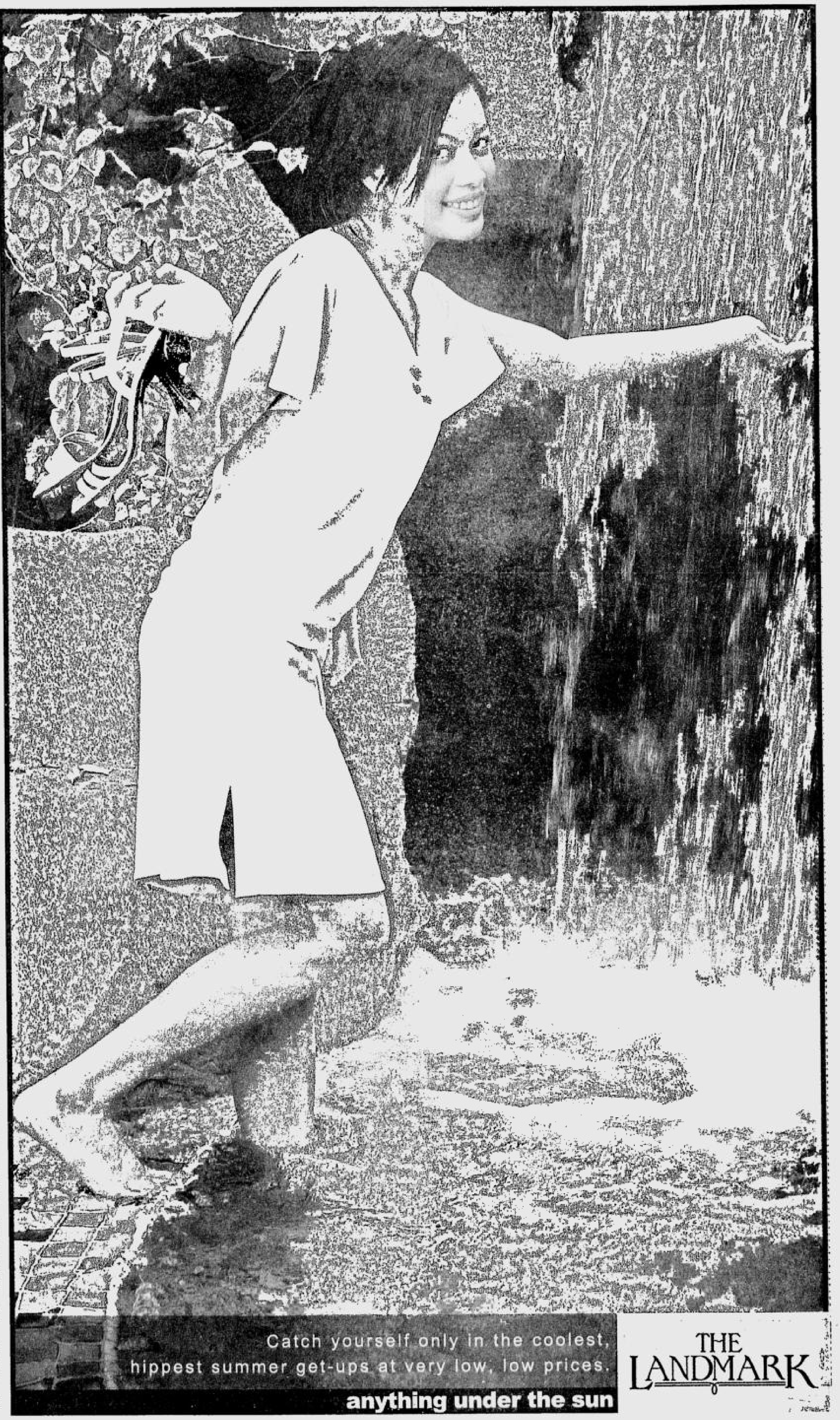

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OPINION

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Mission run

EDITORIAL

THE AMERICANS call it "mission creep." But the way things are shaping up, the evolution of US military involvement in the Philippines might as well be called mission run.

Mission creep is the term US officials use to describe a deepening and widening military entanglement in the Philippines. In this creepy scenario, the US military will expand its war against terrorism to include other groups fighting the Philippine government like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and possibly the New People's Army.

Top American and Philippine officials strongly deny that an expanded role for US troops is in the works. The 660 US Special Forces now in the Philippines will be here for only six months, not a day longer, they say. Their mission, these officials point out, is carefully circumscribed by the Terms of Reference agreed upon by both sides.

Their actions suggest otherwise.

For instance, Philippine military officials have long had the habit of labeling rebels of any ideological stripe as terrorists. But now they never miss any opportunity to link the MILF to Osama bin Laden's international terrorist network, al-Qaida. Of course, it is not merely coincidence that the word has been the open sesame to US military action after Sept. 11, 2001.

It's an effort the Americans don't discourage. In fact, they have been doing some linking of their own, with several leading US publications asking why their troops are not fighting the separatist MILF which constitutes the "real terrorist threat." On his visit to Manila earlier this week, Director Robert Mueller of the Federal Bureau of Investigation warned the government officials that al-Qaida terrorists who fled from Afghanistan could be heading for Southeast Asia to seek sanctuary in countries like the Philippines. And of course, there was US President George Bush making no distinction between the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF in his speech during the commemoration of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks earlier this month. All this plus Bush's pledge to stamp out terrorism wherever it rears its ugly head portends a longer-term Philippine engagement for US military forces than originally planned or announced

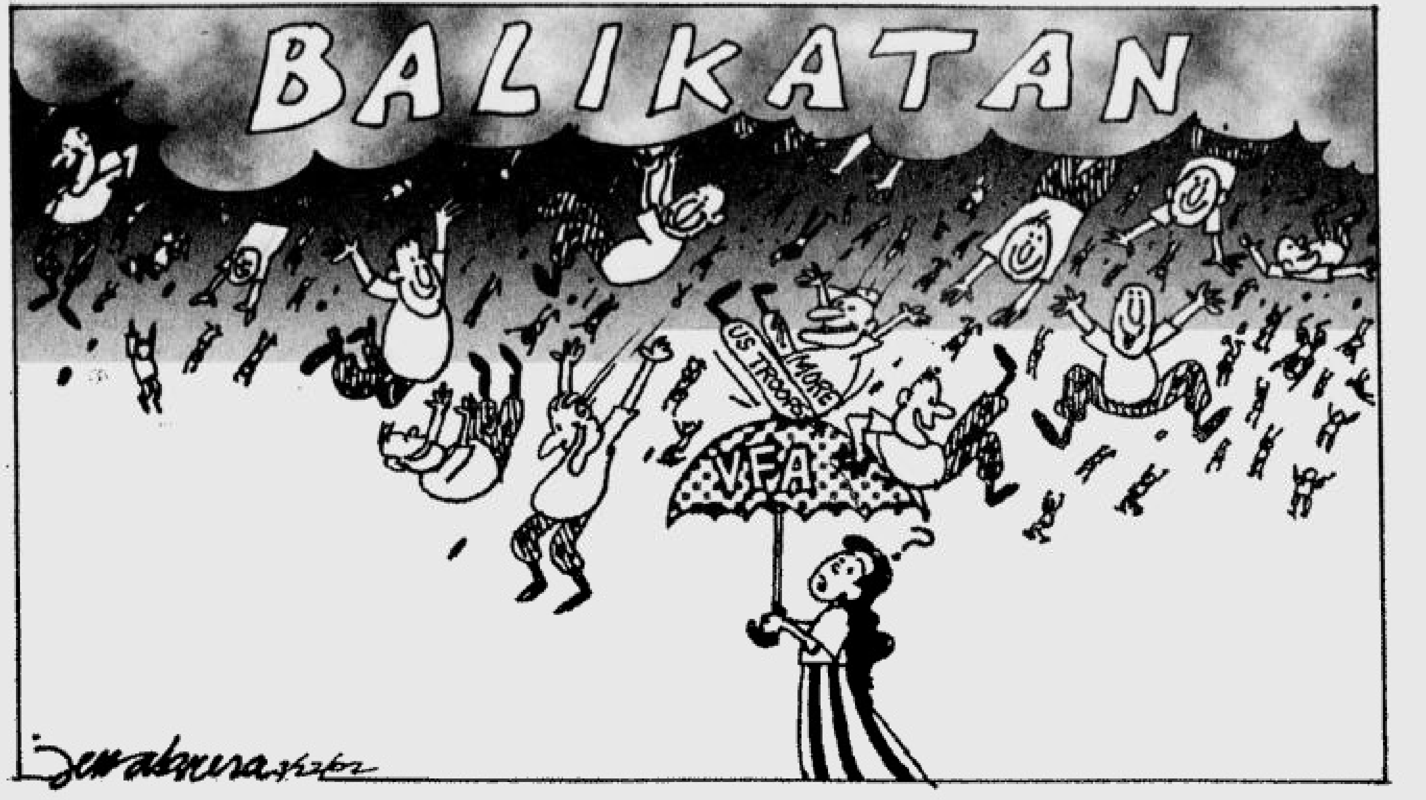
There are other indications that the United States may be looking farther than six months. One is the request to bring in 300 additional troops which will build roads and bridges, undertake medical missions and perform social services. The objective is obviously to win the hearts and minds of the people in the troubled areas of Mindanao and therefore make those places inhospitable to terrorists and other troublemakers. But unless entire communities fall in love at first sight, it is going to take longer than six months to achieve that goal.

Then there was the announcement made by the military spokesperson that 1,700 additional US troops are coming for another joint RP-US military exercise called Balikatan 02-2, this time to be conducted in Luzon. This was corrected one day later by Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes who said that actually 2,665 US troops will be taking part in the exercise. More than that, Reyes also disclosed that there will be 10 more military exercises involving US troops scheduled for the rest of the year, although these will be "relatively smaller" than Balikatan 1 and 2.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo raised the figure higher, saying as many as 5,000 American soldiers may be coming in the months ahead. But she added that the arrival of thousands of new US troops shouldn't be a cause for alarm since it's all part of the war games regularly held under the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

Still, that's a lot more troops, a lot more exercises and a lot more activities being planned, giving rise to the suspicions not only from the usual objectors to US military intervention but even from some members of Congress that six months could be forever and the enemy would have a face other than that of the Abu Sayyaf. Where is all this leading to?

The administration may keep referring to year-round war games as "training exercises," but this won't disguise the fact that the US military presence is acquiring some permanence.



The best site for the Bonifacio Monument

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE PREMATURE raising of fuel prices by the local oil companies shows how the local oil cartel cheats its consumers. The price of crude in the world market has gone up, true. But that higher-priced crude has not even reached our ports yet. According to the Oil Price Watch, the first of these shipments won't get here until the end of March. The tankers carrying them are still sailing on the high seas.

It will take two or three more weeks to unload the crude and refine it. Therefore, the fuel refined from that higher-priced crude oil will reach the gas stations by mid-April at the earliest. So what the oil companies are selling at a higher price beginning yesterday is their old inventories, refined from lower-priced crude. They are selling to us, at higher prices, old stocks which should have been sold at the old, lower prices until they run out. Prices shouldn't have been increased until mid-April. Right now, they are selling overpriced gas.

Haven't you noticed that when world crude prices drop, the oil companies take a long time to lower prices? Again, they cheat. They're already selling gas refined from the lower-priced crude but they still charge the new, higher rates. When crude prices rise, on the other hand, they raise gas prices too soon as they did yesterday. They rake it in both ways, coming and going. Considering that they sell millions of liters of gas each day, even a few centavos in overprice translates to hundreds of millions of pesos of undeserved profits for the unscrupulous oil companies every day. If the overpricing lasts a week or more, they rake in billions of pesos in overprice.

Ironically, the new players which are supposed to give the Big 3 competition to force prices down, are among the first to raise prices. Oil companies, big or small, are all greedy and opportunistic.

We have to do something to tame their appetite.

* * *

There is now a big debate on where to transfer the Bonifacio Monument because the Metrorail extension from West Avenue, Quezon City, will run above it. Caloocan Mayor Rey Malonzo wants it to stay in Caloocan but he has no place to put it in. He wants to put it in Tala, Novaliches, but that is as bad a place as its present site. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza offered the Liwasang Bonifacio in front of the Central Post Office. Developers of Fort Bonifacio want it on one of its streets. The painter Malang suggested the open field across the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta.

Now sculptor Jerry Araos has another suggestion: The Diliman Triangle of the University the Philippines campus in Quezon City. It is a 3.1-hectare piece of public land bounded by University Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue and the proposed extension of Carlos P. Garcia Avenue. "The University community amply provides the atmosphere of intellectual acuity and emotional fervor which is a necessary envelop to the masterpiece of National Artist Guillermo Tolentino," Araos said.

In this land, the UP History Department has identified the continued existence of a living well, Araos revealed. "This well is known by oral tradition as the well of Tandang Sora," he said. "Old inhabitants of Barangay Krus na Ligas, known in Philippine history as a haven for retreating Katipuneros, said that it was beside this well where Tandang Sora and the other women patriots treated the wounds of the stricken Katipuneros."

A good site but a small one. It is only 3.1 hectares but the Bonifacio Monument needs a big wide open space to be properly appreciated. That is why it is already out of place at its present site, hemmed in as it is by tall buildings, the LRT terminals and by the infernal traffic. So I have still another suggestion.

Why not on the Commonwealth property of UP, just across Commonwealth Avenue from what Araos suggested? The Diliman Triangle has already been set aside for a mini-forest park, a joint project of UP, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Quezon City government. A Memorandum of Agreement is ready for signing by UP president Francisco Nemenzo Jr. and Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez. The agreement provides that the DENR allocate a certain amount, initially P2.5 million, to make this space into a forest park. Araos suggests that the Bonifacio Monument be inserted into this forest park.

But that means Bonifacio and his Katipuneros will again be hemmed in, not by concrete buildings, but by trees.

The UP Commonwealth property, on the other hand, is a big wide open space extending from the Arboretum to the Asian Institute of Tourism. It is now just a wasteland tempting landgrabbers, land developers and squatters. Former UP president Emil Javier almost turned it over to a land developer to be converted into another concrete commercial center and shopping mall. Such a project would have made traffic on Commonwealth even more terrible than it is now. Fortunately, the Asian economic crisis decapitated the real estate market and the project was scuttled.

Before that harebrained idea rises again, transfer the Bonifacio Monument there. Whatever the UP does with the Commonwealth property later on, the monument can be its focal point. It will be an honor for UP to host the monument for the national hero. After all, it is rated as one of the best sculptures in the world, done by no less than its own dean of sculpture, Guillermo Tolentino.

While UP still has no use for it, the DENR and the Quezon City government can develop it into a park. When UP already needs it, the park can always give way.

Honest people

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I DON'T know how true it is, but the new chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission doesn't have a cellular phone. He can't afford it.

On his swearing day in Malacañang last Monday, Dario Rama, 62, took a taxi. Thankfully, it wasn't stopped by the guards manning the checkpoint near the Palace, and so Rama managed to get there in time for the occasion. Rama doesn't own a car, despite also having served as a former commissioner of the Commission on Elections in the past. The warring factions of that organization may wish to learn a thing or two from him.

Donna Pazzibugan and Rocky Nazareno, who filed the report, managed to learn about Rama's situation in life only in the course of casual conversation. Rama was not one to advertise it, he probably thought it was the most natural thing in the world. They were talking about the fact that the PAGC had only a very small budget, which seemed out of proportion to the President's expectation of it. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had said during the swearing-in that she wanted her administration to be remembered for scuttling graft. Rama did not complain or suggest that people should put their money where their mouths were. He said he didn't mind, he was used to small budgets. He himself had lived well enough without a cell phone, which was beyond his means.

I do not know Rama, but I am willing to believe—or hope—that people like him exist: honest men in government. Frankly, I do not know why there and then, the President did not decree that the entire budget of the Office of the Ombudsman, except for P1, be transferred to the PAGC. That is where it is more likely to do good. While at this, have you seen that gleaming new building of the Office of the Ombudsman in Science Road? There's something almost Biblical about it, like a mausoleum that gleams on the outside but rots on the inside. Or it's like the personality of Aniano Desierto, who will be remembered as the ombudsman who talked the most and did the least.

I've known a couple of people like Rama in the past. One of them was the chief auditor of the National Capital Region, also called Metro Manila, many years ago. His name is Leon Pilar. He's still alive as far as I know, though ailing—he's now in his 80s. He rose through the ranks by dint of hard work, and was one of very few auditors who did not become rich. A strange pass for someone who got to the top of the heap during Marcos' time, when auditors were all-powerful and earnestly wooed by the equally all-powerful heads of numberless government offices. Pilar's record of honesty was so legendary he was not only reappointed to various positions after the 1986 Revolution, he was kept working even after compulsory retirement age. It was, if I am not mistaken, at that time that he became head of the NCR auditing office, an office people in three-piece suits driving elegant cars trooped to on bended knees.

I remember one funny story he told me many years ago. Not owning a car, he normally took a taxi to office, and during light hours, jeepneys. He dressed simply, as befitted an ordinary commuter, though neatly. He hopped off a jeepney one day in front of his office and passed through a small passageway near the gate where the visitors entered. He was stopped by the guard. He told the guard who he was, but the guard, refusing to believe him, demanded an ID. As he could not produce one, the guard would not let him in. He fumed there for several minutes until he finally managed to coax the guard to allow him to use the telephone. He called his chief of staff, and the confusion was soon cleared up.

The guard was profusely apologetic, and thenceforth each time he saw Pilar entering the gate would salute him and offer to carry his things.

The other person I know who was like this was the late Martin Ocampo. He was the judge who was assigned to the celebrated case of the slaying of the Chong sisters, which was how he got to be known nationally. Before that, few people knew him. He lived in a small *accesoria* in Cebu City, and did not even own a TV set. His prized possessions were his books—he particularly loved reading Dostoevsky. But I've written about him before, and need not repeat what I've said.

It can be done. One can be a public official and remain honest. It's just a matter of choice, and strength of character. But this also brings me to a very important point, which is what we are doing to make people like this possible.

These are all very admirable people, but are they the people we invite to graduation ceremonies to impart wisdom to young graduates? Are they the people we ask to become the godfathers of our sons and daughters in their baptisms or weddings? Are they the people whose friendships we desperately seek for no other reason than that they bring light to our world?

Not at all. We do not invite them to graduations because they are not "big" enough, unlike the crooks in office who are rich and powerful and act important. And we like our schools to be associated with bigness. We do not ask them to become godfathers to our kids' baptisms and weddings because they are not influential enough, and cannot serve as patrons or benefactors to our sons and children. And our children, by the very way we raise them, will need patrons and benefactors to succeed in life. And we do not cultivate their friendships because they are not in the end admirable, they are laughable people who are absolutely of no use to their friends and families. They are losers, and we want to be associated only with winners.

We want to know why honest people are so hard to find in positions of power? Well, it's not just the power. It's also—you and me.

Time to call a spade a spade

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE BALIKATAN 02-1 joint RP-US military exercises, launched last January, are nearly halfway through their six-month time frame, but the troops have not been involved in serious encounters with the Abu Sayyaf.

From field accounts of the exercises in Basilan, the RP-US troops have closed the ring tighter around the Abu Sayyaf, sealing its routes of escape from its jungle lairs. Most recent accounts report of minor skirmishes on the edge of Abu Sayyaf lairs, giving the impression that these have set the stage for the storming of the outlaw strongholds.

The slow progress of the operations is fueling a public demand for action and also the perception that the exercises have developed into a "phony war." From American sources who have visited the Basilan "front," the objective seems to be to spring the three hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf—an American couple and a Filipino—following which the troops would pour in to flush out the Abu Sayyaf.

In this scenario, it is considered important for the Americans to show results and deliver the message not only to Filipino groups but also foreign groups linked to the al-Qaida terrorist networks that sure retribution follows attacks on the US heartland, as well as American citizens anywhere in the world—a reminder of the protection the Roman empire accorded Roman citizens in its far-flung conquered territories.

The time, however, for staying on the periphery of combat zones is running out. If no decisive action is taken within a few weeks, the apparently broad Filipino public opinion support for Balikatan 02-1 will erode.

Despite the official euphemism labeling the military games as "training exercises," few Filipinos are fooled by this description and they consider them as war or combat primarily designed to eradicate the Abu Sayyaf and secondarily only to improve the fighting ability of Filipino soldiers aided by American high-tech weaponry.

Let's call a spade a spade. Public opinion favors the American military presence in Basilan for a limited and focused objective and Filipinos have no illusions about the exercises being hypothetical war games. The exercises are targeted at live enemies and are not just a display of new weaponry. Public opinion has ignored the criticisms raised by nationalists and the Left over issues of sovereignty and the specter of a prolonged American military presence in Mindanao. The test is the result in wiping out the Abu Sayyaf armed component, following which civic action projects could follow to attack the root causes of outlawry and terrorism.

Once the exercises can deliver swift military victory, all the criticisms against the exercises and the semantical description of the exercises will just die on the vine. The public mood recalls Deng Xiaoping who said that it does not matter whether the cat is black or white so long as it kills mice. Since combat is what public opinion expects, its pointless to masquerade the games as training exercises.

At the moment, the government's initiative in allowing American military intervention in the Abu Sayyaf campaign has the benefit of public opinion momentum. The mood is like the military campaign during former President Estrada's all-out war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, in which the military captured more than 40 MILF camps.

If the exercises fail to take advantage of this mood and produce a surgical military victory, they would end up as a paper exhibition of military technology and troop movements.

Even as the special forces and Filipino troops are probing into the heart of the Abu Sayyaf positions, there is already talk of expanding Balikatan 02-1 into Balikatan 02-2, the latter involving more troops and shifting the venue to Luzon. Also, the defense department is planning for expanded multinational exercises, in which troops from other countries will participate.

There's nothing wrong with forward military planning as a continuity of Balikatan 02-1, but the next Balikatan and the expanded multinational exercises will require the amendment of the terms of reference (TOR) that now govern the current Basilan exercises. Already, the contemplated expansion of the Balikatan exercises involving a larger number of US troops than the 600 now involved in the Basilan operations is fueling criticism and suspicion of American intentions to use the Philippines as a staging ground for anti-terrorist actions in neighboring countries tagged by President George W. Bush as sanctuaries of al-Qaida terrorist cells.

The defense department, as well as its US sponsors, is biting morsels too large to swallow. The current exercises should first deliver military results to pave the way for public acceptance and support of expanded exercises. The build-up on Balikatan 02-1 has whetted the public appetite for action. If it succeeds, it would be easier to justify the expanded exercises. Nothing validates foreign policy initiatives better than success.

For Fil-Ams, money is not power

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A WELCOME bit of positive news yesterday was the story by Jennie Ilustre that a Filipino-American has been named one of the "Rising Stars of Politics 2002."

A Pinoy "rising political star" is really no surprise, given the Filipino penchant for and obsession with politics. But Rodney Jay C. Salinas is a rising star in American politics, a signal achievement given that the Fil-Am community has not really been blazing trails in local or national politics in the United States.

For their number and status, Filipinos in the United States haven't achieved the kind of visibility and presence that other ethnic minorities have attained. Why, for instance, is there no "Filipino town" in a major American city, in the same way there are Chinatowns, Little Vietnams and Koreas, or even Little Italys? Of course, there's a strip of eateries and courier shops in Queens, and a similar one, I'm told, in New Jersey. In the general area of Daly City in the Bay area, the Pinoy visitor can't help but think of home, what with the proliferation of familiar Pinoy brand-names, such as Goldilocks, Jollibee, even Max's Fried Chicken. But unless you're familiar with these establishments and know them to be Pinoy in origin, it's easy to overlook them among the other strip mall outlets.

The reason given for Pinoy "invisibility" in the United States is that Filipinos have had such an easy time with assimilation that they feel no need to live together and find security within a familiar cultural setting. Such facility with "blending in" with the dominant culture would be the envy of any ethnic migrant community, but for Fil-Ams, the flip-side of this facility has been a lack of cultural identity, one of whose effects has been an inability to organize and thereby gain political clout.

Does the honor given to Salinas signal the political coming-of-age for Filipinos in America?

* * *

NOT just yet. The story on Salinas was bracketed with another news report saying Fil-Ams in California "died a thousand deaths" when Christopher Cabaldon lost the primary race in his bid to run for member of the state assembly.

Even if another Fil-Am, Tom Santos, won his primary bid, the setback for Cabaldon seems to have been quite a shocker, given that close to a million Filipinos live in California.

But however inchoate Fil-Am political empowerment remains, Filipinos in America have made great strides in another field—economic empowerment.

A report published in the San Francisco Examiner late last month cited findings of USC professor Dowell Myers showing that Filipinos racked up the lowest poverty levels among all ethnic groups in the United States.

"Filipinos have almost negligible poverty. It's lower than every other group, including college-educated Jews," said Myers, who said data showed the poverty level among Filipinos was at "rock bottom." The study found that about 4 percent of Filipino residents registered below the poverty line in the 1990 Census, and by 2000 that figure "shriveled to about one percent."

* * *

THE HOUSEHOLD poverty rate among Filipinos is so "shockingly low," the report said, that "it begs the question, 'What are they doing right?'"

Myers notes that Filipino-Americans are not a particularly wealthy group, "but a combination of cultural, social and historical safety nets have kept a majority of them from tumbling into severe poverty." Regardless of where they start on the socio-economic spectrum, the report said, "as the Bay Area's 400,000 Filipino residents become more established, they tend to move away from San Francisco and Oakland into bedroom communities such as Daly City and Hayward. Large cities are gateways for many immigrants, whereas suburbs signify owning land and houses and a slice of the American pie."

The most famous of these predominantly Pinoy bedroom communities in the Bay Area is Daly City, whose mayor is a first-generation migrant, Michael Guingona. In many ways, Guingona typifies and explains the Fil-Am success story, ascribing his good fortune to a wide network of relatives and family friends who provide support and assistance to the arrivals, as well as a welcoming environment that eased an otherwise difficult transition.

* * *

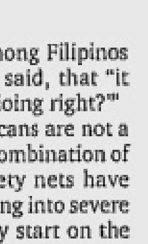
HARD work also planted the seeds of Fil-Ams' current prosperity. Guingona's mother, a single parent, held down two jobs, typical of most Fil-Am householders. Also a factor is the higher average level of educational attainment among Filipino migrants, as well as their facility with English.

"The multiple jobs held by parents tend to skew income results," observed Theodore Gonzalves, professor of Asian American studies at San Francisco State. "And children in Filipino families also find jobs at a young age," which further influences the numbers.

Studies also show that Filipino households often show a trend toward multiple breadwinners, with more than one family living under the same roof. "The result is a reduction of household poverty in dollar terms. Although it often is crowded, everyone has shelter and food. And their culture dictates that no one go hungry."

This focus on attaining the trappings of a good life, and extending the same privileges to as many family members as possible, may in fact be the reason Fil-Ams have not made waves in the political arena. But as the community becomes more established, they may yet find the time and moxie to make their presence felt in politics. The honor given Salinas may not yet mean the doors to political power have been flung open for Fil-Ams, but it is certainly yet another foot in the door.

Anthropologist's notes, historian's source



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

DANIEL Folkmar was an American anthropologist who came to work in Manila at the turn of the last century. He was connected with the St. Louis Exposition Board and the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes. Folkmar's ethnological research area in 1903 was the Bilibid prison in Manila. Much of his work centered on the measurement of Filipino heads—he not only took detailed anthropometric measurements, hundreds of photographs were also taken, and plaster casts made of prisoners' heads. I wonder where the plaster heads are now, as these would be fascinating to see if only to force some correlation between the criminals of today and those of the last century based on Folkmar's data.

Like most research projects, Folkmar's was an accidental discovery. I was originally searching for references to the fine furniture of cane and Philippine hardwood that was made in the prison. Much old furniture in government offices today were made by prisoners and were known as "Bilibid furniture." While I did not get anything on the prison furniture, Folkmar's papers alone were worth the trouble as he described the prison as "a great anthropological laboratory." Folkmar wrote: "Since Bilibid prison serves as a penitentiary for the entire archipelago, it offers an unexcelled collection of the leading peoples from Northern Luzon to Mindanao. It is needless to say that it was easier to handle the prisoners than would have been the case on the outside, since they thought themselves required to (undergo) the processes of plaster-casting and disrobing for photographs, as in the case of the ordinary prison regulations. The work was confined to men. Whether they are fair representatives physically of their respective tribes is a question involving criminological and social discussions which cannot be entered into here. The writer is of the impression that they are for the most part fair representatives."

Over 3,000 prisoners were examined, mostly Tagalogs. There were a few women which makes me wonder whether there was a Bilibid section for dangerous women. People were classified according to racial type: Tagalogs, Neo-Malays, Moro-Indios, Northerns, Southerns, etc. Then, the following measurements were taken: height, arm span, shoulder, chest width, weight, length and breadth of head, breadth of nose, etc. Photographs, casts and even some pen drawings were made of noses. The resulting publication was a large album of "Philippine Types" that leads me to wonder how much of the warped images American colonials maintained of Filipinos were based on Folkmar's research.

Folkmar was not only interested on racial anatomy. His fascination with heads led him to take notes on head-hunting in the Cordilleras and attempts by the American colonial government to stop it. In 1915 Folkmar wrote a long feature article for Sunset magazine that described his travels. The article was rejected but the unpublished manuscript can be consulted in the Smithsonian. As a historian I was drawn to his description of Tirad Pass:

"...The top of the mountain was not easily reached. On the contrary my tired horse and perspiring self halted more than once to wait for the shadow of a cloud approaching lazily over the mountaintop. I had enough of walking in that hot sun and it was coming to the point where I had to pull my little pony up the trail instead of his helping me. He was getting weak in the knees, and I would tumble over whenever I halted him. This climate is enervating to the beasts as well as to the men that come from the temperate zone. Perhaps after the American stock has lived as many generations in the Philippines as have the ancestors of my pony, it will be quite as useless and degenerate.

"The trail up is too steep a pitch for wagons, even if it had been wide enough. As it was. The making of the road over Tirad Pass was a tremendous undertaking and the Spaniards are given much credit for its completion. It is said to have resulted in the depopulation of one or two valleys along the route. Those who survived the work moved beyond the reach of the taskmasters.

"This pass is famous, too, as the field of a hotly contested battle between some of Aguinaldo's *insurrectos* and the first Americans who pushed their way into the interior after the fleeing chieftain. One of the ablest of *insurrecto* generals, [Gregorio] del Pilar, here lost his life in making his last desperate effort. It, no doubt, seemed an almost impregnable pass, with the *insurrectos* lining the summits of the range and out of sight behind rocks and trees, while the Americans toiled up the long barren slopes. Aguinaldo, in the meantime, was safely beyond the mountains. He tarried some time in Cervantes and finally found a safer refuge in the inaccessible mountains of Bontoc. We felt the lack of water on this mountainside. Our soldiers must have bitterly suffered from that cause. I fortunately, had provided myself with a canteen, but before the summit was reached, it was empty, and Igorote carriers and my horse were in distress."

Then as now, Tirad Pass is difficult terrain. What started as an anthropologist's notes have become material for a historian. Surely, there is much more material waiting to be uncovered by Filipino researchers in libraries and archives abroad.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Filipinas of the world

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HONOLULU—March was the cruelest month for Roman emperor Julius Caesar as he was stabbed to death by assassins that fateful day known as the Ides of March.

But several centuries later, March would become the month of celebration for the women of the modern world. It would be designated in the annals of the women's movement as Women's History Month. And the Eighth of March (not the "Ides" which falls on the 15th) would be celebrated as International Women's Day.

In the United States, this particular month is doubly significant. This year, 2002, marks the 30th anniversary of the passage of Title IX of the Department of Education's federal programs. Title IX was not just another legislation that is routinely passed by the US Congress. It was the beginning of a "quiet revolution" that would give substance and reality to the concept of "women's liberation." This landmark legislation expressly prohibits discrimination against girls and women in federally funded education, including in athletics programs.

Space doesn't allow listing all the profound changes that Title IX has brought in the last 30 years, but it has made a dramatic difference in the lives of many women in this country. In 1971, for instance, only 18 percent of female high school graduates were completing four years of college, compared with 26 percent of their male peers. Today that gender gap no longer exists. Now, women also make up the majority of students in America's colleges and universities, in addition to making up the majority of those receiving master's degrees, and those entering business and law schools nationwide. By extension, this change has also affected gender equity in the labor market.

In the Philippines, the frontiers of women's expanded roles have been pushed onto the international scene. I have just finished rereading "From America to Africa: Voices of Filipino Women Overseas" (2000) edited by veteran journalist Lorna Kalaw-Tirol. "The Filipino woman is everywhere in the world," says the book's back cover, and I couldn't agree more. In a previous commentary, I mentioned how an American academic traveling in the Arctic region was astounded to meet a Filipina working in a restaurant, and she happened to be from the Ilocos, the region that this academic was doing previous research in.

This book edited by Lorna delves into the remarkable lives of 19 Filipinas of the world, who work or have worked in unknown places in as far away as Cameroon in Africa or in remote societies of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It details their happy, lonely and bittersweet lives in the ever-expanding world of the Filipino diaspora. In the last three or so decades, Filipino out-migration has been predominantly female. Every story is told from a first-person perspective, and the volume's publisher, Imelda Nicolas, characterizes the book as "like a river, with many tributaries, rivulets, springs, sources and undercurrents."

Space again will not permit an extensive portrayal of these intrepid and fascinating Filipinas of the world, but they can be mentioned in the order that they appear in the book. They are: Sharifa Zeannat Ali-Salih, nursing director in Saudi Arabia; Tita Angangco, information technology expert in Ontario, Canada; Nini Bautista de Gracia, nuclear safeguards scientist in Vienna; Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, writer and teacher in California; Violeta Centeno-Beltran, OB-GYN specialist in Chicago; Josie Opena Disterhoft, childcare consultant in Chicago; Ching Escaler, diplomat in Geneva; Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi, artist in Paris; Sr. Emma de Guzman, missionary nun in Cameroon; Betty King, animal rights activist in North Carolina; Linda Layosa, domestic helper turned international editor in Hong Kong; Loida Nicolas-Lewis, corporate magnate in New York; Tina Liamzon, development consultant in Rome; Elizabeth Medina, translator-interpreter in Chile; Lucia "Chay" Misa, CEO of a multinational company; Emelina Quintillan, human rights advocate in Eastern Europe; Coco Quisumbing, TV anchor in Singapore; and Juanita Salvador-Burris, community activist in Chicago.

The book is a delightful compendium of these extraordinary women and their intriguing lives in the world of international work. The funniest episode is narrated by Sr. Emma de Guzman, who not only learned to eat viper's meat but also had to learn the native language Ewondo, which has seven tones. In a lecture, she used the word "*ngon*," which could mean month, noon, a young woman, monthly period, or a special kind of food. She used the word to refer to something that happens once a month, perhaps, a meeting, but the tone she used promptly translated it as one's "monthly period"! Her audience was more amused than aghast and tried (so) hard to restrain their laughter. Language could be a professional hazard while working abroad, folks.

Sister Emma met with another hazard and fortunately survived it. She was on her way with her mother superior to another district when their car struck a tree but she was able to jump out in time. Her mother superior unfortunately hit her head against the tree and died. She characterizes her work as consisting of "days of exploding sunshine and darkest gloom," and certainly, the death of her mother superior exemplifies the latter.

It also gives me a vicarious sense of satisfaction watching Coco Quisumbing on TV. I knew her as a child and a young adult in Hawaii and the Philippines—and look at her now—big as life on international television.

While we have all these international successes and we are happy for them, let's celebrate the month of March with a commitment to help our less fortunate fellow women, who are daily victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking, violent deaths and other kinds of indignities and fates worse than death itself. We never know about them; they are nameless, faceless, voiceless. They are crying out to be heard.

Belinda A. Aquino introduced a section on Women in the Third World in the Political Science curriculum at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she teaches and directs the Center for Philippine Studies.

THEY SAID

Submission to God

"We must show our submission to the will of God by empowering the greater majority of our people, by loving one another and by sacrificing to live for the sake of others."

—Prof. Taha Basman, secretary general of the Philippine Islamic Council

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Fewer subjects lead to better learning

A NEW principal in an American school was thoroughly frustrated with the achievement scores of his students. He evaluated the situation and, after conferring with his teachers, he decided to eliminate some minor subjects and just concentrate on five major subjects: English, Science, Math, Civics and History. The new curriculum ensured that the children had more time for mastery learning and were not burdened with doing so many things at the same time.

The improvement in the students' scores in the Scholastic Aptitude Test reflected the efficacy of the new curriculum. An additional bonus was that the children were happier, having more time to do their assignments and for play, which further resulted in better behavior in school and at home.

This innovation was adopted by neighboring districts and so far 60 schools in the United States are using this curriculum. This was documented in the book "Education and Development: The Schools We Need" by E. Hirsch, in which the phrase "Less is more" was first introduced. Less meaning fewer subjects and more for mastery and better learning.

A good friend of mine transferred his son from an exclusive (and very expensive local) Catholic Chinese school to an American school and he is now doing very well. Intrigued, I focused on this information for my thesis proposal and stumbled on the book by Hirsch and another book, "Alternative Education," that included articles by Mario Fantini which documented the various innovations in learning institutions being done by teachers and administrators in America

The American school where my friend's son is now enrolled has a five-subject curriculum and charges $9,000 per year. Why don't we adopt the same curriculum in our public schools?

Some of our neighboring countries, specifically Singapore, Japan and South Korea, are using this five-subject curriculum. So do Switzerland and England, although England has added a sixth subject, Religion.

Wouldn't it be nice if religion is emphasized and included as a subject in all our public schools? Exclusive Catholic and private schools have religion.

What is important is that we accept changes. The "new" curriculum being pushed by the education department is new to us Filipinos but not to others. It has been proven effective in other countries. The curriculum gives a lot of benefits. As an educator and administrator of a school, I can cite a few:

1 . It gives children more time for mastery of their lessons.

2. It gives more time for teachers to provide remedial assistance to those who need it badly.

3. It gives a gleam of hope to schoolchildren who belong to a class that has as many as 70 or even 120 students. The class can be divided into two and the children can get the proper training.

4. Private schools need not raise their tuition. They can in fact reduce it a little and serve more students at reduced fees.

5. International high schools have five subjects and a five-hour time schedule for classes. The rest of the day can be spent for peer teaching, remedial classes and extracurricular activities.

What is imperative now is that we encourage teachers to do further studies by attending seminars or taking up graduate studies. Foreign schools have a big number of teachers with masteral and doctoral degrees. Ironically, we have educational institutions that do not extend full scholarships to their own teachers despite the fact that they have their own graduate schools. The acquisition of higher learning should be part of the personnel development package of all schools.

NGOs should help our public school teachers get postgraduate degree studies for they can multiply the effects of their good education among thousands of schoolchildren. As one educator wrote, "If only we can educate all the women of this generation, then we can ensure that the next generations will be highly educated."

Right now we need a beautiful mind to be creative and accept innovations for the welfare of our children and country.

—ARMI JAUCIAN-MARTINEZ,
directress, Sunvalley
Montessori Foundation Inc.,
15 Benedictine St., Sta. Ana
Village, Parañaque City

We ought to give GMA a break

AS stakeholders/taxpayers in this post Edsa II government, and imbued with the Christian spirit, I and especially my wife, Emma Gonzales, a witness in the impeachment proceedings, pray for us all that we might have a loving discernment and empathy for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her leadership of our common journey in these trying and perilous times.

To carpers and critics, honest Abe Lincoln once retorted and paraphrased rather freely here, "If all your worth in gold was entrusted and put in the hands of someone to carry across a river clinging to a rope, would you shake the cable and keep shouting—you stoop a little more—go a little faster—and lean a little more, to the north, no to the south? No! you would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safely over."

As the able and singular Sen. Joker Arroyo, quoting John Randolph, when attacking his political opponents with questionable agenda, has said, "They are all with splendid abilities, but utterly corrupt, like a rotten mackerel by moonlight, they shine and stink."

President Macapagal may be a farmer's daughter and a *labandera's apo* but she is ours. Have a heart, give her a break.

—JACINTO CORAL
GONZALES, 220 Amos corner
Joshua Streets, Jordan Plains,
Novaliches, Quezon City

An overdue honor for Senator Diokno

THE PROPOSAL to rename Taft Avenue to Sen. Jose W. Diokno Avenue is a welcome move. Senate Bill 2011 sponsored by Senate President Franklin M. Drilon will give honor and recognition, long overdue, to the late Senator Diokno, a great Filipino, a man of great achievements whose academic brilliance was made more meaningful and put to good use in legislation as a member of the Senate. He is believed to be the most brilliant Filipino of his generation. (He topped the CPA board examination and then the 1944 Bar examination with a rating of 95.3 percent without finishing his bachelor of laws degree.)

His patriotism is beyond reproach. He proposed and endorsed legislation beneficial to the country and opposed those that will be a burden and disfavor the interest of the people. He was strongly against the Philcag bill, to send Filipino troops to Vietnam and appropriating millions of pesos yearly. He said that the bill is an affront to the national dignity since spending the yearly appropriation for other people is unjustified "when the government cannot even provide the basic needs of the common man."

He personally and successfully prosecuted Harry Stonehill considered untouchable because of his stronghold and connection with the men in power then.

Diokno gave everything within his capacity for democracy and the country. He was a resolute advocate in protecting human rights. Because he was vocal against the dictatorship and a potential presidential candidate, he was incarcerated and placed in solidarity confinement in a room without windows with Sen. Ninoy Aquino in Laur, Nueva Ecija. When the resolution for his habeas corpus petition before the Supreme Court was unacted on, he withdrew it, saying that when convenience precedes conviction there is reasonable ground to believe that he cannot get justice from the "honorable court" which, he jokingly stated, consisted of 14 men and a woman who had the "balls." He was referring to Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma.

He continuously refused and flatly rejected juicy offers to join the dictatorship. When he saw the many persons thrown in jail for unknown reasons, most of whom could not defend themselves, he formed the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) after his release which exists to this day. After Aquino's assassination, he authored and coined JAJA (Justice for Aquino, Justice for All).

Diokno died in 1987. His accomplishments and the service he gave to the nation during his time may be forgotten and may just be a part of the canvass of Philippine political history. But with the proposal, the honor we give to this great Filipino and his legacy will live on.

—FRANCISCO S. SERRANO,
lawyer, Libon, Albay

More of free trade won't protect RP industries

TRADE Secretary Mar Roxas said recently that the administration is rethinking the country's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) as he complained of the tariffs imposed by the European Union on Philippine tuna exports.

Roxas is correct on one point: there's something fishy in how global trade operates in the era of globalization. "Free trade" is more abused than observed by the developed countries when they seek the entry of their goods into other countries, but they build high tariff walls to protect their own industries.

"Free trade," through a lowering of tariffs, is a misnomer in the era of global monopolies. In the guise of leveling the playing field, these corporate heavyweights want global competition to be transformed into a boxing match between Mike Tyson and Onyok Velasco. And so today's globalization means a virtual recolonization of the country by foreign capital.

Yet, instead of calling for the protection of local industry, Roxas wants more liberalization, more "free trade" and zero tariffs for all. But how can he complain of unfair trade when his prescription is the cause of the problem itself?

He argues for a zero tariff on our tuna exports but makes nary a peep about the impending zero tariff on our imports whose current low rates are already damaging the country's manufacturing and agricultural sector.

However, even with his proglobalization framework, we would support Roxas if he goes beyond the anguish of tuna exporters and pushes for a review of our economic policies and our commitments to the WTO.

If Jose Rizal is to be paraphrased, our country's leaders truly smell like rotten fish for they are less than patriotic in protecting local industries. Yet, more appalling for militant labor is the continuous inability of the administration to protect labor from the scourge of globalization. It has not retracted its cheap labor policy to entice foreign investors and to enhance the "global competitiveness" of the local industry.

—RENATO MAGTUBO, chair,
Partido ng Manggagawa, 655
Gen. Ordoñez St., Parang,
Marikina City

Standard US military gear

JUST a comment on your photo caption titled, "Worlds apart." The mosquito net is part of our gear, the Alice Pack (also called the 782 gear).

Along with this protective measure, we have inoculation before even stepping into an area that is infested with insects, like mosquitoes, flies, etc. We are furnished with all the equipment that is "comfortable," because we have a risky job and we need all the rest we can get.

—NATHAN ANTONIO, United
States Navy, Camp Lejeune,
North Carolina,
USA

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICE ALFREDO L. BENIPAYO AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

WHEREAS, Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo has been appointed by Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines, as Chairman of the Commission on Elections;

WHEREAS, the appointment of Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo has been well received and hailed by practically all sectors of society: the bench, bar, church, academe, business community and the public in general;

WHEREAS, the Chairmanship of the Commission on Elections is a highly vital and sensitive position requiring a person of utmost probity and independence;

WHEREAS, the appointment of Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo to the aforesaid position is now pending confirmation before the Commission on Appointments;

WHEREAS, Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo is eminently qualified to occupy said position considering his track record as an exemplary student, respected educator, noted jurist, able Court Administrator and last but not least a true christian lawyer.

As an **EXEMPLARY STUDENT**, he was a consistent scholar at the University of Santo Tomas where he finished his Bachelor of Arts degree, Magna Cum Laude, and his Bachelor of Laws, Cum Laude;

As a **RESPECTED EDUCATOR**, he is a brilliant academician,a prolific writer, a learned mentor and bar reviewer in various law schools, thereby earning a reputation as one of our leading legal scholars;

As a **NOTED JURIST**, he was appointed as CFI Judge in Malolos, Bulacan in 1974 and as Regional Trial Judge in Manila in 1976 before he was promoted to the position of Justice of the Court of Appeals in 1987, where during his entire stint as a magistrate he gained the respect of the Bar and the Bench for his recognized competence and unassailable integrity;

As an **ABLE COURT ADMINISTRATOR**, he was handpicked by the Supreme Court to supervise the courts all over the country, and during his term introduced a wide range of reforms strengthening the Judiciary.

As a **CHRISTIAN LAWYER**, Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo is God-fearing, endowed with a solid catholic education and imbued with lofty moral values worthy of being emulated as an epitome of a true christian lawyer.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, it is hereby resolved that the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas endorse, as it hereby endorses to the Commission on Appointments, the confirmation of the appointment of Justice Alfredo L. Benipayo as Chairman of the Commission on Elections.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration.

The Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas
Manila, Philippines

City of Manila, March 14, 2002

Onwards 2011...

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

10 rebs killed in Afghan attack

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan—The US military said on Thursday it killed at least 10 Taliban and al-Qaida fighters who attacked coalition forces in eastern Afghanistan and would question a wounded prisoner.

One US soldier was in stable condition after being shot in the arm in the firefight early on Wednesday at an airfield at Khost near the eastern border with Pakistan.

Khost and the province of the same name border the area where for three weeks the biggest ground battle of the Afghan War was fought in the rugged mountains around the Shahi Kot Valley in Paktia province.

"We searched the area we were attacked from and we found more than 10 bodies," US spokesperson Major Bryan Hilferty said.

"We detained one person in the area that we received the fire from."

Hilferty, briefing reporters at Bagram Air Base near Kabul, had said on Wednesday coalition forces were attacked for several hours with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars.

The Pentagon later said an AC-130 gunship—a four-engine turboprop aircraft capable of delivering withering machine guns and 105mm cannon fires—was flown in to respond to the attack.

Hilferty said on Thursday he was not sure whether the dead rebels were killed in the firefight or the air strike. He said the detainee was wounded and would be questioned to see whether he was al-Qaida or Taliban.

Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press reported three Afghan allied soldiers were killed, but this could not be confirmed.

As Afghans celebrated an ancient equinox and new year holiday for the first time since it was suppressed by the fundamentalist Taliban regime, Hilferty said any jubilant firing of weapons was little cause for concern.

"I am more worried about mortars aimed at me than about celebratory gunfire," he said.

The last of the major battles of "Operation Anaconda" in the Shahi Kot area ended on March 13 when US, Canadian and Afghan troops stormed rebel caves and trenches. ***Reuters***

BITER REUTERS

Annet Minduru, 30, is escorted to a cell at the Jinja Road police station in Kampala March 20. Minduru bit off her husband's penis and testicles on Sunday night after her husband slapped her. She might be charged with causing grievous bodily harm, police said.

Iraq seeks to expand UN talks

UNITED NATIONS—Seeking to broaden talks on weapons inspectors, Iraq has angered Washington by asking the United Nations to answer questions about US threats to topple President Saddam Hussein.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan released to the 15-member Security Council about 20 questions he received from Iraqi Foreign Minister Naji Sabri when they met on March 7 to talk about the return of UN weapons inspectors to his country, according to documents obtained by Reuters on Wednesday.

The queries ranged from asking whether US threats against the Iraqi government were a breach of international law to whether US "spies" would serve on inspection teams.

Iraq also asked how long inspectors would stay and if Baghdad would be compensated for damage inflicted by US and British bombings to enforce a flight exclusion zone.

Annan put the questions into categories and asked Security Council members for a response by April 10. He plans to meet Sabri again before the end of April.

Iraq's questions did not indicate Baghdad would reject the return of the inspectors.

But diplomats said it was doubtful Sabri next month would give a "yes" or "no" to the question of inspectors returning to Iraq. Instead he would probably send any replies to his queries back to Baghdad for analysis, they said.

The UN inspectors left on the eve of a US-British air strike in December 1998, meant to punish Baghdad for not cooperating with the arms experts.

They have since been barred from returning to see if Iraq has any weapons of mass destruction programs. The arms issue is key to any lifting of 11-year-old UN sanctions imposed at the close of the Gulf War. ***Reuters***

Andersen pleads innocent in Enron case

HOUSTON, Texas—Accounting giant Arthur Andersen pleaded not guilty here Wednesday to obstruction of justice in the Enron affair, as its attorney predicted the firm would be vindicated in court.

US District Judge Melinda Harmon set a May 6 trial date for Andersen, which is charged with shredding documents and destroying e-mails about Enron, the failed energy giant.

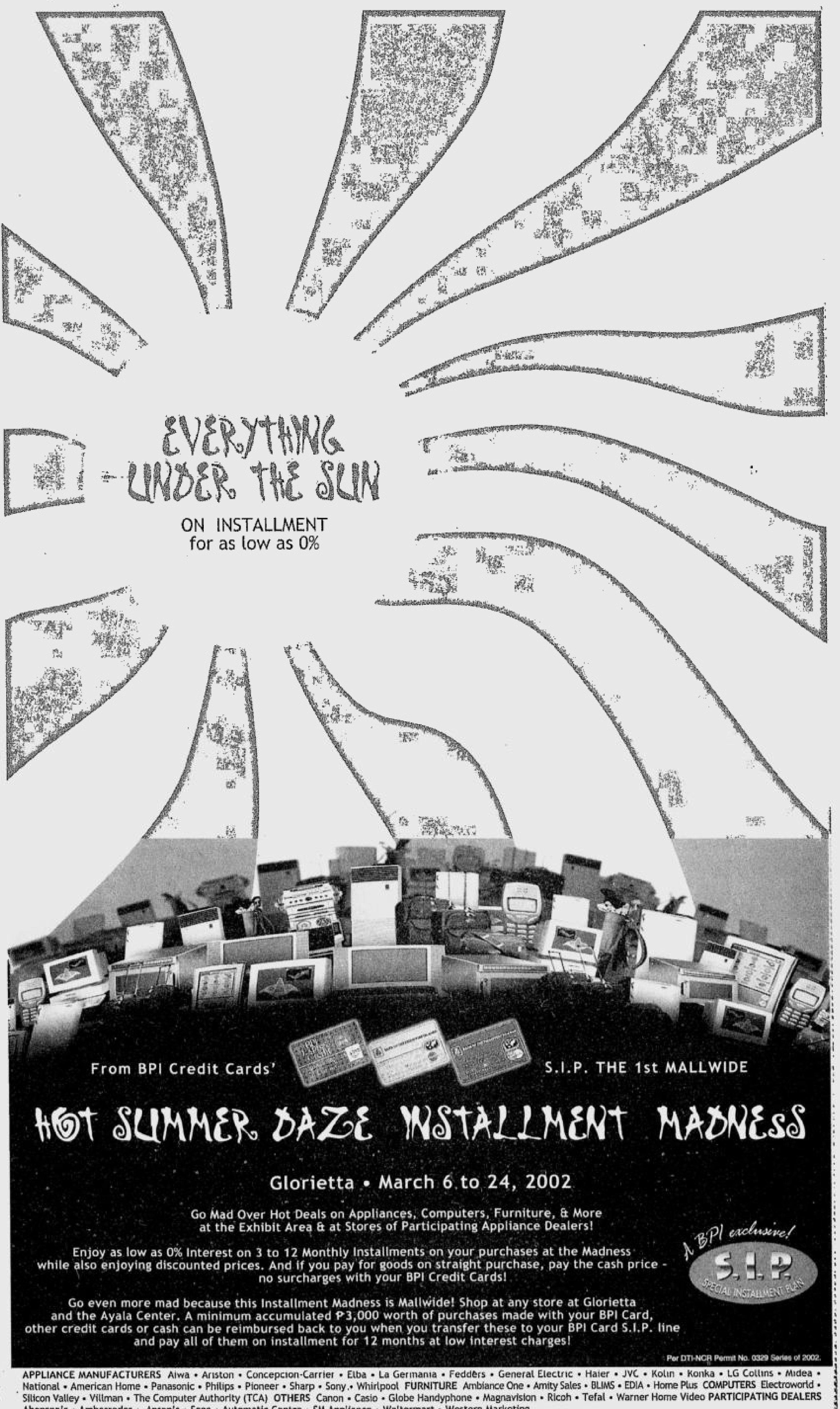
The judge accelerated the case at an emergency hearing requested by Andersen attorney Rusty Hardin shortly after Magistrate Calvin Botley set a May 20 trial date.

Hardin argued that Andersen wanted a speedy trial to avoid further damage from the indictment.

"We are left trying to save the company," he said. "This company is totally at the mercy of the federal government."

The firm has claimed that the action by authorities "a gross abuse of government power" after prosecutors took the unusual step of seeking an indictment against the firm itself rather than individual employees.

Some 200 Andersen employees demonstrated outside the courthouse here to show their displeasure with the prosecution of the firm. Some carried large signs or wore T-shirts saying, "I am Arthur Andersen." ***AFP***



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Car bomb blasts near US Embassy in Lima kill 6

LIMA—Two powerful car bombs exploded late Wednesday near the US Embassy in Lima killing at least six people, three days ahead of a visit here by US President George W. Bush.

Interior Minister Fernando Rospigliosi, who visited the scene along with Vice President Raul Diez-Canseco, said six people were killed and "an undetermined number of people were injured."

Unofficial reports said 30-40 people were injured, some seriously.

Rospigliosi said one of the fatalities was a police officer who was inspecting one of the suspicious vehicles. Police said a private security guard at the US Embassy was also killed—the nationality of the guard was not provided.

Police said two car bombs exploded at 11:30 p.m. outside a Banco de Credito de Lima branch office at the El Polo shopping center in the eastern Lima neighborhood of La Molina.

One of the cars was parked outside the bank, while the other exploded 100 meters from the US Embassy, police said.

The explosions caused widespread damage to the bank and shopping center and set three automobiles on fire.

Nobody so far has claimed responsibility for the attack, billed as the worst in nearly 10 years.

"I don't rule out a national or international origin (of the bombing), Rospigliosi said, "but Dircote (Anti-terrorism Intelligence Administration) did report that eventually there could be some sort of attack."

The bombing comes three days ahead of Bush's brief visit to Peru on Saturday. About 150 leftist demonstrators marched on the US Embassy Tuesday to protest the visit.

Officials at the US state department in Washington were not immediately able to confirm the reports.

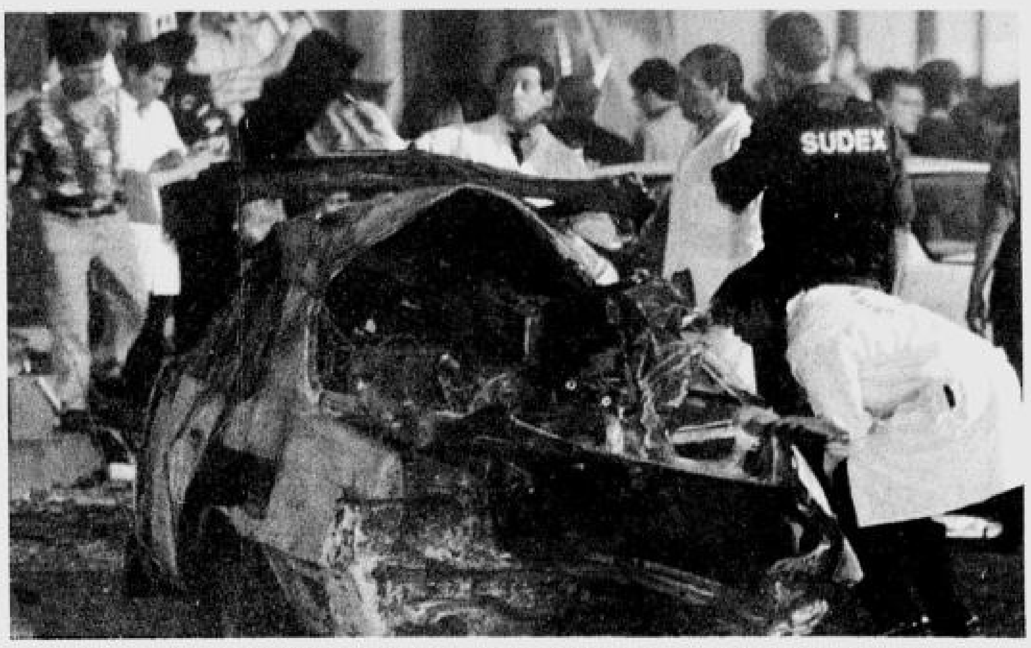
Peruvian authorities had tightened security around the capital ahead of Bush's visit, canceling all leave for the city's 22,000 police officers.

Diez-Canseco told reporters the Peruvian government would not be intimidated by the rebirth of terrorism, and that he had called an emergency, overnight Cabinet meeting.

Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo was away in Monterrey, Mexico, to attend a UN conference on financing development.

Reporters with Toledo said he was informed of the attack and was awaiting a full report before taking a decision.

Peru's notorious leftist Shining Path guerrilla organization was practically dismantled under former president Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000). From 1980 to 1992, some 25,000 deaths and $30 billion in damage were attributed to the rebel group. *AFP*



PERUVIAN police inspect the site of a car bomb explosion near the US Embassy in Lima, March 20. At least six people were killed in the blast, three days before a visit by President George W. Bush.

REUTERS

Number of Israeli war 'refuseniks' growing

TEL AVIV—Political pressures, threats from the Army leadership and the prospect of jail time have failed to daunt a small but growing number of Israeli reserve soldiers refusing to serve in the occupied Palestinian territories, the so-called refuseniks say.

"We already have 331 petitioners and the list of supporters has passed 7,000," says Amit Meshiah, one of the movement's top officials, who has set his sights on 500 reservists refusing to ship out to the occupied territories.

The refusenik campaign started with an announcement published in Israeli newspapers on Jan. 25 by 52 reservist officers.

The soldiers declared they would not do tours of duty in the occupied territories, which have been lit ablaze by nearly 18 months of violence.

"We will continue to serve in the Army when it concerns defending the state of Israel but not in the task of oppression and occupation of the Palestinians," the reservists said in their declaration.

The 52 signatories were almost all second-lieutenants and from combat units, notably parachute, tank and elite infantry corps, who stressed that they were not pacifists and were moved to action by their belief in a Jewish state.

Sitting in a Tel Aviv café, nearly two months after the birth of the movement, Meshiah contests recent statements by out-going Army chief of staff Shaul Mofaz, an avid proponent of Israeli attacks inside the heart of self-rule Palestinian areas.

Meshiah rejects Mofaz's assertion that the reservists have lost support and some protesters were now willing to serve. "On the contrary, the movement has expanded," he says.

"We are gaining new members and that five of our number are in prison does nothing but boost our determination," says the 30-year-old officer, who is also a student at Tel Aviv university.

He points to the fact reservists' relatives and supporters join the rallies each week outside the military prison in northern Israel, where the detainees are held.

Since January, 13 Israelis have been thrown in jail for refusing to do a tour of duty in the occupied territories, says a group called "New Profile," a feminist organization opposed to the militarization of Israeli society. *AFP*

Italy declares emergency state over illegal aliens

ROME—The Italian government declared a state of emergency across the whole country Wednesday to combat a growing influx of illegal immigrants.

"It is important to adopt urgent measures to face the presence of illegal aliens in the best way possible, resorting to imposing a state of emergency as proposed by interior minister (Claudio) Scajola," a government statement said.

The government earlier proclaimed a state of emergency in Sicily, two days after a ship containing around 1,000 Kurdish migrants landed on the island.

The measures give local authorities, notably police, increased powers to manage the sudden problems brought on by such mass arrivals of illegal immigrants.

No time limit has been set for the emergency measures.

The statement also outlined proposals to tighten up rules on asylum seekers, adding that Italian ambassadors from countries where illegal immigrants to Italy have started out would be called to Rome for discussions on what measures to take. *AFP*

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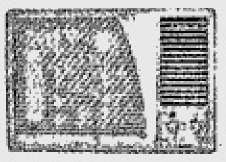

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Aid only for states which use it wisely, say world leaders

MONTERREY, Mexico—The United States and Europe say they're willing to give more money to poor nations, but only to those who use it wisely. Advocates for the poor worry that will punish the neediest for the sins of their leaders.

Last week, the European Union promised billions of dollars more in aid, while US President George W. Bush said he wants to phase in a $5-billion increase in annual US development aid for countries that "walk the hard road."

Rich nations argue putting conditions on aid will reward countries that are making an effort to improve, instead of wasting precious aid money on governments that will squander it.

"We want to see success as measured by improvements in living conditions," Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill said Wednesday at the UN International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico.

Bush travels to the conference on Thursday. He said in Washington on Tuesday that he "wasn't interested in funding corruption."

"If a country thinks they're going to get aid from the United States, and they're stealing money, they're just not going to get it," he said.

The idea is opposed by many activists. During a forum of nongovernmental organizations held last week in Monterrey, officials denounced placing conditions on aid and called for "an alternative economic model that puts people in the center of development."

On Wednesday, some 200 antiglobalization protesters marched to the conference site, yelling at riot police and throwing rolls of toilet paper over security barricades. They also burned an effigy of Mexican President Vicente Fox and a coffin representing international lenders, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Since his defeat of Mexico's long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party in July 2000, Fox has been held up by the developed world as a shining example of what they are looking for from poor countries.

The Mexican leader and former Coca-Cola executive has pledged to fight widespread corruption and crime, as well as build a solid economy with sustainable growth. However, his progress on those goals has been meager since taking office in December 2000.

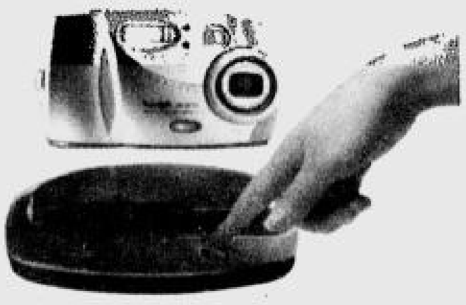
But while Mexico is exactly the kind of country Bush and others want to encourage by offering aid, Afghanistan under the rule of the former Taliban militia—where common people needed aid as much as any in the world—would have been a prime example of the kind of country that wouldn't get development assistance.

"We have to do something about the Afghanistans of the world," UN Development Program administrator Mark Malloch Brown said.

He suggested that countries with chaotic governments and economic instability should receive advice and technical support before money.

O'Neill indicated Argentina was a case in point. Asked if the United States would provide more financial assistance, he noted that the United States had already contributed to several earlier aid packages and that Argentina used the money within months without measurable results. **AP**

Shoot



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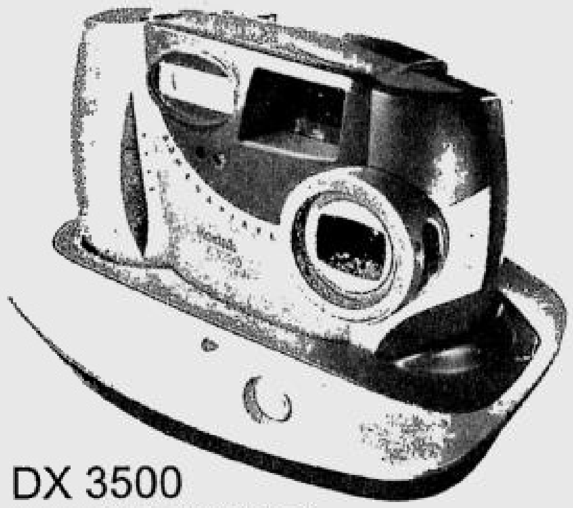

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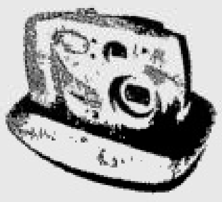

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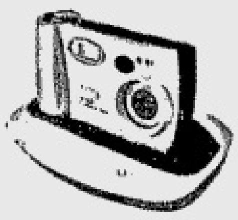

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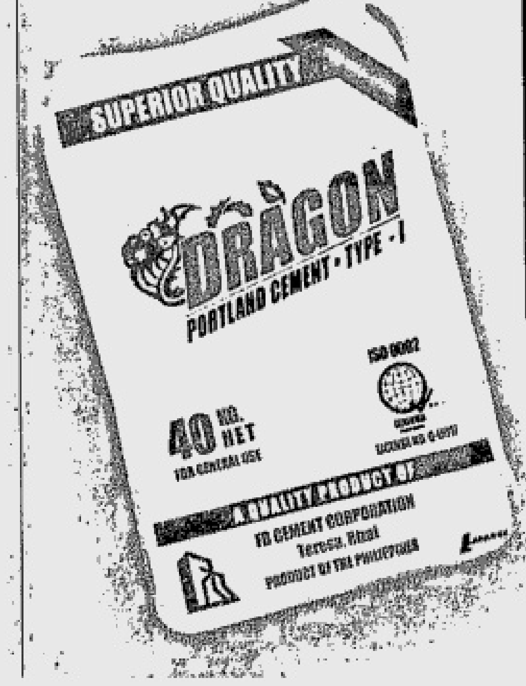
Paranaque / Las Pinas	Rizal	115.00	125.00
Marikina City	Rizal	115.00	125.00
Rizal	Rizal	115.00	125.00
Binan, Laguna	Rizal	115.00	130.00
Calamba, Laguna	Rizal	115.00	130.00

* Ex-works prices have been effective since November 9, 2001.



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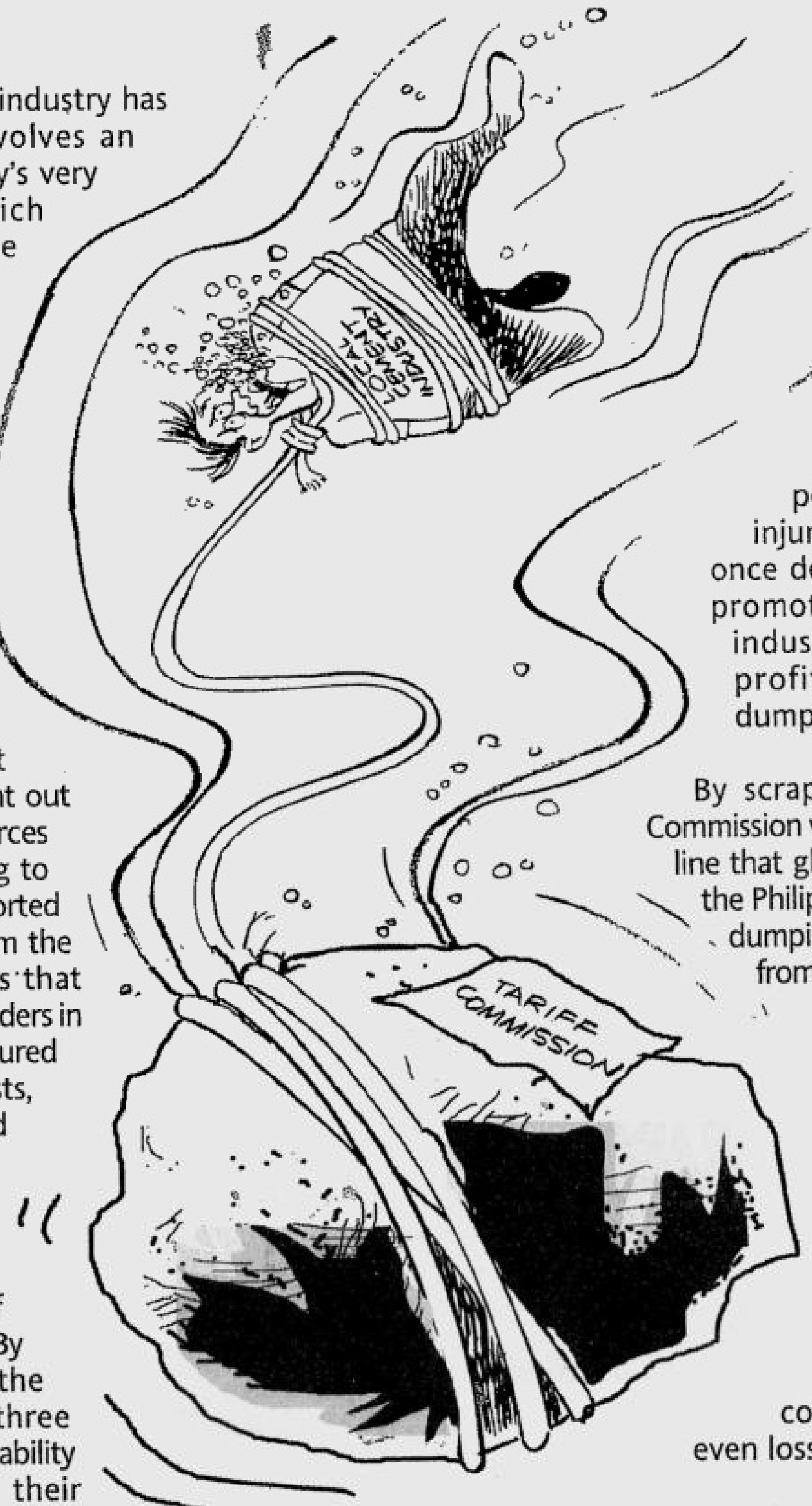
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

National Price Coordinating Council
Department of Trade & Industry

SAVE JOBS. SAVE LIVES.

Oppose the Conspiracy to Kill the Cement Industry

GMA wants to create jobs, but the Tariff Commission seems bent on eliminating them.



A grisly plot to kill the cement industry has just been exposed, and it involves an unlikely instrument, the country's very own Tariff Commission, which succumbed not only to the blandishments of a gang of moneyed, powerful and influential traders but their foreign principals, as well.

The Tariff Commission did a Judas Iscariot when it moved to scrap the P20.60 per bag tariff that had been imposed on imported cement since November 2001.

It was a compensatory relief for local cement manufacturers, four of which went out of business or had their work forces retrenched or scaled down owing to the continuing influx of cheap imported cement. The industry reeled from the impact of unmitigated imports that began in late 1998 as a gang of traders in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao secured cement imports at very low costs, about P86 per bag, and dumped them here by undercutting local manufacturers.

In no time, these traders secured more than 20 percent of the market with nary a sweat. By doing so, they caused the retrenchment of workers in three companies and threatened the viability of many more. Through their connections with the higher echelons of government, these traders gained billions through preferred treatment, not paying taxes and other imposts due the government to the detriment of legitimate manufacturers and investors in the cement industry.

With their viability threatened, cement manufacturers petitioned government for protection, thus the tariff. It is this same protective tariff that the Tariff Commission has moved to abolish with one stroke of the pen. It has ruled that there is no injury to the local cement industry, at once defying the snowballing policy to promote, protect and defend Filipino industries from the depredations of profiteers and foreign companies dumping their products here.

By scrapping the protective tariff, the Commission willy-nilly adopted the same old ugly line that globalization would create heaven in the Philippines, with the country becoming a dumping ground for all kinds of products from other nations.

The Tariff Commission has become not only privy to a plot to kill the local cement industry, but has become the mastermind to murder an industrial sector that the Commission itself admits is having a tough time managing its resources, bedeviled by interest expense, higher power costs, foreign exchange losses and even losses by subsidiaries.

These are the very arguments for protecting our own industries, not the bases for allowing them to be eaten up by foreign giants and local compradors. The Tariff Commission deserves popular condemnation for being part of this contemptible conspiracy.

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Villagers hopeful despite gas findings

By Ronaldo Dizon and Russell Arador
PDI Central Luzon Desk

VICTORIA, Tarlac—The dream of an improved life for a village here will remain just that—a dream.

This came after the Philippine National Oil Co.–Energy Development Corp. ceased its operation of the Victoria Gas Drilling Project (VGDP) early this month.

The usual hubbub in the area was transformed into ghostly silence as most equipment have been packed and ready to be transported elsewhere.

In a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER, the public relations office of the Department of Energy said the "PNOC consortium drilling for natural gas in Tarlac province has declared the Victoria-3 gas well not commercially viable because the gas was found to be immersed in water."

However, it added, "the consortium remains optimistic about the gas prospects of the Central Luzon basin."

"While the well flowed gas at a rate of one million standard cubic feet per day, extensive testing indicated that the flow rate could not be sustained because (of the) gas being immersed in water."

The consortium decided to "plug the well for safety and environment reasons . . . after exhausting all remedies and adopting several test design considerations to isolate the gas from the water."

But the Victoria project "provided the consortium enough data to guide its future exploration activities in the Central Luzon basin," according to the statement.

"The consortium is set to conduct a post-well evaluation to help determine the consortium's next course of action," it said.

Federico Cortez, barangay chair of Masalasa, said he was still hopeful that the PNOC-EDC would return to their village.

"I think they will return to continue the project," said Cortez.

His only complaint against the operators of the VGDP was that they did not inform him of their decision to pull out.

"They should have informed me of their decision so that I can explain it fully to my village mates who are hopeful that the project would improve our village's life," he said.

"*Binalewala nila kami* (They ignored us)," he added.

Like most of the barangay's 1,396 residents, Cortez has spent most of his life tilling the fields. He started tending to their piece of land at the age of eight.

Nelly Cacayuran, who was hopeful that her two sons could work in the VGDP, was distressed.

"It will be difficult for us, especially since our crops were destroyed by the drought," she said.

The prolonged drought in the area has rendered the second cropping of rice useless. Farmers suspected that the gas drilling in their area might be the culprit.

"It was not like this last year," said Cortez. "We suspect that our crops were destroyed because of diggings in our village's rice fields."

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will experience rains and occasional gusty winds. The rest of Visayas, Mindanao and Bicol region will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI32° Lo 22°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 27° Lo 14°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 19°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 22°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 21°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 20°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 23°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 25°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 25°
Cebu	Rains and Gusty Winds	HI 28° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Rains and Gusty Winds	HI 30° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos	Rains and Gusty Winds	HI 32° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Rains and Gusty Winds	HI 28° Lo 22°
Davao	Rains and Gusty Winds	HI 29° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/03/22/02

ROUNDUP

Latvian seaman jailed

DAVAO CITY—A Latvian seaman was jailed for allegedly mashing the private parts of a female singer at a bar here on Monday night. The suspect was identified as Dennis Ivanovs, alias Kim Quolaliev, 26, a seaman working at the MV Sedonia Carrier, a European cargo ship docked at Panabo City. The 35-year-old victim claimed that Ivanovs entered the dressing room of Venue while she was fixing herself. The suspect was released from jail when the victim decided not to file criminal charges.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

CDs worth P1M seized

DAVAO CITY—Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation seized pirated video and audio compact discs valued at P1 million inside a warehouse near the city police headquarters here. Leoncio Evangelista, NBI director for Southern Mindanao, said the raid on Yaquin Commercial on Friday was part of the government's campaign against violation of intellectual property rights in the region. The NBI seized 130 boxes, each containing 180 assorted CDs and VCDs. Evangelista said charges would be filed against store owner, Norol Yaquin Padin, who maintains the warehouse on Nograles Avenue.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

NPA rebel killed

COTABATO CITY—A communist rebel was killed while five others were hurt in an encounter with government troops in the hinterlands of Magpet, Cotabato, the military said yesterday. The slain New People's Army guerrilla was identified as Reno Cual, 27, of Barangay Libas, Tantangan, South Cotabato. Maj. Julieto Ando, 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said the gunfight erupted while the soldiers were on patrol in Barangay Lower Binay at around 5:30 p.m. on Monday. Soldiers recovered two Armalite rifles, two rifle grenades, a fragmentation grenade, land mines, blasting caps and communist documents.

Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bank employees charged

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Seven employees of a bank in Sta. Fe town are facing criminal charges for allegedly stealing P4.9 million from the bank's cash deposits. The National Bureau of Investigation on Monday filed the charges against Sherlita de la Cruz, branch manager of Agribusiness Bank and of the Tam-an Multi-Purpose Cooperative Inc.; Virginia Buccat, cashier; Nerio Buccat, teller; Lilibeth Vergara, loan supervisor; Victoria Vibas, accountant; Juvelyn Marcelino, bookkeeper; and Joseph Magno, employee. Lawyer Norman Taloza, NBI district office chief, said the complaint of grave abuse of confidence stemmed from the bank employees' cash advances taken from bank deposits between 1992 and 2000.

Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

4 rob suspects nabbed

TUY, Batangas—Police captured four armed persons who seized a truckload of sugar on Monday in Barangay Obispo, this town. The suspects were identified as Gerry de la Cruz, 30, of Sta. Cruz, Manila; Candido Prinsipe, 33, and Rene Brillante, 33, both of Barangay Wacat, Nagcarlan, Laguna, and Danilo Bartolome, Jr., 51, of Sikatuna Village, Quezon City. Two other suspects escaped and are now being hunted by the police. Police said the suspects also took another truckload of sugar in Taal last month.

Mel Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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AFP checks war footing, abides by truce order

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Even if government forces have the combat momentum, the head of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here yesterday said they would still abide by a Holy Week truce with communist rebels.

"Even if the present situation shows that we have the initiative and we are the ones dictating the tempo, we are willing to abide by the truce," Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina, Solcom chief, said.

On Tuesday, the New People's Army declared that it would observe a truce next week in deference to the country's observance of the Holy Week. The next day, the government declared a similar ceasefire.

Carolina described the truce as a political solution and "the sole prerogative of the commander in chief," he told newsmen here.

But he warned that the military was ready in case rebels violate the truce agreement.

The leftist human rights group Tanggol Karapatan has assailed the combat-ready posturing of the Solcom in dealing with the communist insurgency in the Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon) area.

"This only shows the reality of the present hellish non-stop military campaign in Southern Tagalog," Nancy Rada, TK-ST spokesperson, said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER yesterday.

Rada alleged that on March 15, Army soldiers of the 1st Infantry Battalion forcibly evacuated at least 10 Dumagat families in Sitio Tayabasan, Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City.

"They were threatened that they will be killed and their houses razed to the ground should they return," she claimed.

She identified one Carmelita de la Cruz, a Dumagat, as having been sexually harassed. "She was forced to undress in front of her five children," Rada added.

She named at least two campaigners of the Bayan Muna party-list group in Mindoro as having been gunned down in two separate incidents.

On Monday, Carolina said "game *na*!" before newsmen here to describe his order to start the campaign to crush the communist insurgents at the Calabarzon.

However, he said they would run after only the armed rebels. "I want to clarify the order lest we be accused of human rights violations," he explained.

Lt. Col. Vergilio Espineli, head of the Army's 1st IB, said they expected the "malicious and baseless" accusations from the ranks of "self-proclaimed" human rights crusaders.

Carolina said he has already invited a representative from the Commission on Human Rights to conduct an impartial investigation of the alleged abuses.

A FOREST guard battles a brush fire that hit a watershed area in Baguio City.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Fires hit pine forests at Camp John Hay, PMA area

BAGUIO CITY—Two fires hit the city's pine forests at Camp John Hay's Voice of America compound and at the Philippine Military Academy reservation this week, fire officials said.

Chief Insp. Constantine Supanga, Baguio fire marshal, said fire broke out on Monday near the controversial luxury cabin at the VOA, whose ownership was linked to deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Another fire hit the pine forests behind the PMA administration building at Fort del Pilar on Tuesday, Supanga said.

He said the fires, which affected 18 hectares, occurred at noon when the temperature reached 25 degrees Celsius, drying up the wild grass and pine tree canopies.

"Anything will ignite the very dry leaves," he said.

Supanga said fire inspectors were investigating the cause of the fires, noting the uncanny coincidences.

He said both compounds were targets of protests, and were separated only by a five-minute ride. Both fires occurred at noon, he added.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is also due at Fort del Pilar on Sunday to grace the graduation rites of the PMA's Banyuhay Class of 2002.

"But forest fires are very common this time of the year, so we are just being careful," Supanga said.

The brush fire that escalated into a forest fire ate up 15 hectares of Camp 6's watershed area along Kennon Road before it spread toward the PMA administration building.

The fire that burned three hectares of pine forests inside the VOA compound started at the Happy Hallow village south of the former American base land's main gate.

"The fire was very close to the large log cabin in the center. It was (several) meters away from the walls, but we put it out," Supanga said in Filipino.

The cabin was the subject of media investigations in 2000 because of reports that it belonged to Estrada. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

'Caloy' nears; Cebu boat passengers stranded

CEBU CITY—Hundreds of passengers were stranded on Wednesday night when Coast Guard authorities prevented about 20 vessels from leaving the port because of an approaching tropical depression named "Caloy."

But vessels weighing more than 1,000 gross tons were allowed to sail, according to seaman Arnel Conopio of the Cebu Coast Guard Station.

Those affected were small vessels bound for Tubigon and Talibon towns in Bohol and smaller ones and fastcraft bound for Tagbilaran City.

The Coast Guard also prevented the departure of small vessels bound for the Camotes and Bantayan Islands in Cebu, as well as those going to Southern Leyte and Catbalogan town in Samar.

According to a weather advisory released at 10 a.m. yesterday, Signal No. 1 was hoisted over southern Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, Negros Provinces, Southern Leyte, Dinagat and Siargao islands, Camiguin, Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon, Agusan provinces, Surigao provinces, Davao Oriental and Davao del Norte.

Caloy's center was estimated at 130 kilometers east of Hinatuan, Surigao del Norte, with peak winds of 55 kph. It was expected to move west-northwest at 19 kph.

Fely Abias of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration in Cebu said the tropical depression was expected to weaken after its landfall yesterday afternoon.

It was expected to cross to the Agusan and Misamis Oriental provinces last night.

This morning, Caloy was expected to be 60 km northeast of Dipolog City or 85 km southeast of Dumaguete City. It will reach Palawan tomorrow, Pagasa said. ***Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Jobs for vendors seen as solution to CD, VCD piracy

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Muslim leaders in Central Luzon on Wednesday urged the Philippine National Police to spare small traders in its anti-piracy drive that since March 16 have resulted in the seizure of almost 19,000 "pirated" compact discs.

Salung Sunggod, chair of the Central Luzon Muslim Development Association, said Muslim traders in particular should be given time to dispose of their wares and recover their capital.

"It's their only means of survival. They want to venture into other jobs but they do not have much options," Sunggod explained after he and several leaders aired calls to police officials to be "more compassionate" in the drive.

Jobs, not raids, are the best antidote to piracy, they said.

Sunggod, who is also technical chief of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, said traders, mostly Maranaos who had left Mindanao since the early 1980s, were willing to stop selling pirated CDs but could not since they were "getting very little help from the government."

There are about 50,000 Muslims in key cities and towns in Central Luzon, mostly subsisting on earnings from selling various wares on the streets.

"They're very willing to abide but they have no means. Some really live on selling fake items for lack of other work. If local governments can step in by providing jobs, it will be easier for Muslims to leave the business of selling pirated tapes and discs," he said.

Sunggod noted that the business had been rampant only in the last three years and made brisk sales because buyers bought the fake items that were sold at 70 percent less than the prices of the original ones.

Teams of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group raided stalls in Angeles and San Fernando cities and Apalit town in Pampanga; Malolos and Baliuag in Bulacan; Dinalupihan, Orani, Balanga and Abucay in Bataan; Subic in Zambales; and Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija last week.

The Videogram Regulatory Board deputized the raiding teams.

Of the 48 identified stall owners, 12 have been charged with violating the anti-piracy and intellectual property rights laws, according to a report from Supt. Christopher Laxa, CIDG regional chief.

In the same report, Laxa said the 18,217 discs and tapes confiscated in raids were properly accounted for and turned over to Camp Crame in Quezon City for burning.

Laxa said he was aware of the sentiments of Muslim communities but scored some of them for "displaying pirated items with impunity."

He agreed with Sunggod that alternative employment should comprise part of long-term solutions in the government's anti-piracy efforts. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

A MEMBER of the gay community in Davao City does a Rosanna Roces with a VCD-accented outfit during the recent "Araw ng Dabaw" celebration. The actor wore a similar attire to symbolize the entertainment industry's sentiments against CD and VCD piracy.

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Napocor execs face more graft charges

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—The National Bureau of Investigation is filing five more complaints of graft against four officials of the National Power Corp. in Cagayan Valley.

Lawyer Norman Taloza, NBI district chief, recommended the filing of the complaints before the Department of Justice in Santiago City against Marcelo Ganaden, Napocor regional chief; Alexander Alvarez, Santiago sub-station manager; and Ernesto Narciso Jr. and Emmanuel Guevarra, both employees.

The complaints were based on the results of an NBI investigation that revealed that the respondents allegedly falsified documents in five contracts of the power firm from May 1999 to November 2000.

Ganaden dismissed the allegations. "I am only the approving officer here. I approve all these projects and sign the vouchers and checks because I see them (transactions) to be above board," he said.

Except for Guevarra, three of the four respondents are facing six separate charges of fraud and malversation of public funds before the prosecutor's office here, in Tuguegarao City and in Santiago.

Taloza said a contractual laborer at the Napocor sub-station in Barangay Rizal, Santiago, was purportedly used as dummy contractor of various Napocor projects. ***Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

FORECLOSURE WOES

Laguna homeowners hold rally anew

By Romulo O. Ponte
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BIÑAN, Laguna—Homeowners were back on Mendiola on Monday to denounce the foreclosure and selling of more than 1,000 housing units to private buyers despite repeated assurances from Housing Secretary Michael Defensor that this would not take place.

Yolanda Santos, a leader of the Sagip Tahanan at Kabuhayan ng Laguna Inc. (STKLI), told the INQUIRER that the assurances made by Defensor were only for publicity because housing agencies continued with the foreclosure of their housing units.

The units of more than 1,000 homeowners from 38 subdivisions in Laguna, Cavite and Muntinlupa City are already being sold by the housing agencies without their knowledge, Santos revealed.

She said she joined representatives of 3,000 South Metro Manila homeowners who marched on Mendiola (now the Chino Roces Bridge) near Malacañang to appeal anew to housing authorities, particularly Defensor.

Defensor was quoted by another newspaper on March 15 as saying, "We recognize the serious economic difficulties being faced by these member-borrowers and we continue to find ways of easing their burden."

As chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) and the Pag-ibig Fund board of trustees, Defensor had reportedly said the "Pag-ibig will suspend legal action on the account of member-borrowers pending the approval by the board of the Omnibus Loan Restructuring Guidelines."

"This means that their houses will not be foreclosed, so they have nothing to fear," he reportedly said.

Santos said that because of the penalties, "exorbitant" interests and other charges imposed on their loans, their obligations have doubled or tripled.

She cited the case of one homeowner who had an original loan of about P300,000 and was now being charged a total of P1.2 million in loan obligation. "How can any of us pay this amount under this critical economic circumstance?"

An official of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. (NHMFC) said the agency was thoroughly studying the status of each of the 3,000 South Metro homeowners who want to pay only P1,000 each monthly for their amortization.

Alice Kilates, NHMFC division chief of Collection Group 2, said yesterday that her office was now accepting the P1,000 monthly payments from homeowners as deposits while it was is deliberating on how to extend help to them.

Kilates admitted that her agency has already subjected some housing units in Laguna, Cavite and neighboring areas to foreclosure proceedings, but she did not specify the total number of units.

She said she was not sure if all those homeowners are members of STKLI.

She advised all the STKLI homeowners to verify their accounts personally at her office so that they will know their real status of their respective subdivisions.

Negros co-op fears power cut-off due to unpaid debts

BACOLOD CITY—Officials of the Central Negros Electric Cooperative (Ceneco) have raised fears that the National Power Corp. might also cut off its transmission line to it for failing to settle its debts.

Benedicto Peralta, acting Ceneco general manager, said the cooperative owes Napocor at least P200 million in unpaid bills for January and February.

Of the amount, he said, the Napocor gave them until March 25 to pay at least P67 million, which was due yet last January.

Peralta said he already filed an appeal with the Napocor to reconsider its deadline and to allow Ceneco to pay in April.

They had difficulty collecting payments from delinquent consumers because of the Lenten season, he said.

The Napocor cut off its transmission lines to the Aklan Electric Cooperative (Akelco) on Monday for failing to pay at least P75 million in power bills from December to February.

Affected were about 58,000 consumers in Aklan's 17 towns, including Malay where Boracay Island belongs, and the towns of Pandan and Libertad in Antique.

Peralta said the cooperative was exerting all efforts to raise funds to pay its debts to the Napocor.

As of January, the Ceneco had P245 million in collectibles from consumers, Peralta said.

George Sanchez, vice president of the Negros Consumer Watch, also appealed to the Ceneco consumers to pay their bills.

The NCW asked the city government for help by paying about P40 million in power bills to the Ceneco.

During a press conference on Tuesday, it was learned that the city government has a yearly allocation of only P6 million for electricity although its monthly bill is at least P2 million.

Another government agency with unpaid bills to the Ceneco is the Philippine National Police.

"All Ceneco consumers must help, if we do not pay our bills, we will all see darkness," Sanchez said.

Peralta said he has already paid the Napocor some P39 million since he took over the Ceneco from Christopher Rios last week.

He said the 41-man Ceneco advisors committee composed of employees and officials of the cooperative helped him draw up measures to cut costs to raise funds.

The National Electrification Administration appointed Peralta as acting general manager on March 6 after it suspended Rios and the entire board for 30 days pending investigation of Ceneco's operations and management. ***Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

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US medics help rescue 7 wounded RP soldiers

From page A1

helicopter later evacuated four additional wounded soldiers.

Detoyato said the helicopters landed in "an area safe from gunfire."

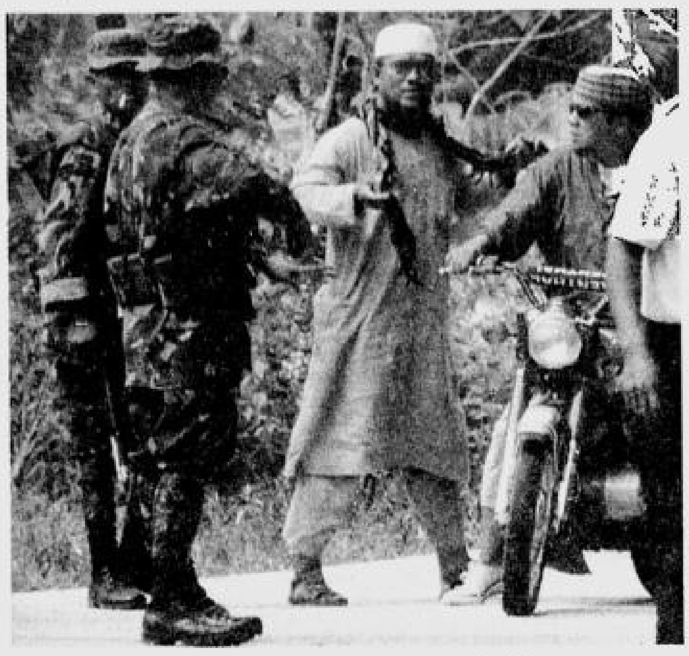
It was the third time since last Friday that American paramedics entered a combat zone for a medical evacuation mission, a major component of the RP-US military training exercise in Basilan.

Reporters at the scene said five American soldiers with assault rifles and bulletproof vests sped out of the 103rd Philippine Army Brigade headquarters aboard a US humvee jeep with a machine-gun mounted atop.

Reporters said three Filipino soldiers accompanied the American soldiers. Six US Special Forces soldiers are bunking with 60 Filipino soldiers and their commander in the sandbagged, hilltop base in the Upper Malangas area.

Scout Ranger Capt. Rommel Pagayon said bloodstains on the ground indicated Filipino soldiers inflicted an undetermined number of casualties on the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

He said the soldiers also recovered women's clothing at the scene, indicating that at least one of the female hostages was with the Abu Sayyaf group believed to be under Isnilon Hapilon.



EDWIN BACASMAS

CHECKPOINT in Isabela-Lamitan highway in Basilan.

The group has been holding hostage American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap for the past nine months.

Unmanned US surveillance aircraft fly over Basilan regularly, increasing the number of sightings of the highly mobile bandits and enhancing the Philippine military's ability to engage them in combat.

Fighting in the area the past week has left one Filipino soldier dead and 12 others wounded. Several bandits have also been reportedly killed, wounded or captured.

On Tuesday, US Green Berets entered a combat zone in the same area to render first aid after bandits firing rifle grenades and automatic weapons wounded two members of a Philippine Army patrol.

At least four rebels were killed in several hours of fighting and six more were later captured, officials said.

In the same area a week ago, two US Pave Hawk helicopters evacuated three wounded soldiers and hauled out one dead after a clash with the Abu Sayyaf.

About 660 US troops, including 160 Special Forces members, are in Mindanao to train Filipino soldiers battling the Abu Sayyaf bandits linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network.

The Abu Sayyaf, thought to number 1,000 before a military offensive started last June, now has only an estimated 60 fighters on Basilan.

The US soldiers are armed but can only fire in self-defense.

The US Special Forces members on Basilan are to stay at all times with local Filipino commanders. They have reportedly entered combat zones only to treat Filipino wounded. ***Reports from Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Martin P. Marfil in Manila; AP and AFP***

NO device to trigger an explosion, a WPD bomb disposal team member learns, as he carries parts and pieces of something not quite a bomb.

ERIK ARAZAS

RP studying US-proposed . . .

From page A1

military exercise as "a counterfoil to the supposed threat posed by China in the region."

"This would involve invasion scenarios, with China as the aggressor-nation, and responses to a strong China move in the disputed Spratlys territory," the official said.

But Golez stressed in a phone interview that Team Challenge would involve "hypothetical scenarios" and would "not be targeted at any particular country."

Balikatan 02-2, involving as many as 2,665 US troops, is scheduled to start next month in Central Luzon.

Certain lawmakers as well as militant groups have expressed alarm at the number of US troops arriving and the frequency of the joint military exercises, saying the United States wanted to make the Philippines a staging ground in the region.

Feb. 27 letter

In a letter to Reyes dated Feb. 27, Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, Armed Forces chief of staff, said the United States had proposed, among others, to make Balikatan 02-2 "part of the US-initiated multinational-linked exercise Team Challenge."

Villanueva said the United States also wanted to "invite multinational planning augmentation team (MPAT) observers from Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore and Thailand," and to have Korean and Japanese planes "provide lift support to fly US troops and equipment into and out of the country."

He said the United States had also proposed the adoption of "an overarching exercise scenario that calls for a UN-mandated RP-led multinational force consisting of RP and US forces."

Villanueva also told Reyes that these "US proposals" had "policy implications that will need the clearance" of the Departments of National Defense and of Foreign Affairs—a point that the defense secretary stressed Wednesday.

Villanueva said, "these activities even in an exercise are beyond the bilateral nature of the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT)."

Nevertheless, Villanueva "recommended" to Reyes not only the US proposals but also the conduct of Balikatan 02-2 on April 22-May 6 in "several locations in Luzon."

Golez pointed out that the MDT and the Visiting Forces Agreement covered the RP-US Balikatan exercises but not the involvement of other countries.

He said the existing agreements between the Philippines and its neighbors only concerned joint naval patrols along common sea borders.

"For one, the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) is not a military alliance like the Seato (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization)," Golez said.

The Seato, now defunct, was formed to counter the communist threat during the Cold War.

Going beyond bounds

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo stressed that the conduct of Team Challenge would be unconstitutional without a treaty.

He also said that apart from Team Challenge, the series of Balikatan exercises were "going beyond the bounds of the VFA," and appeared to show that the Philippines would be the second front of the US-led campaign against terrorism.

"I think they are pushing the boundaries of what is allowed (under our Constitution). They are experimenting on how to make US operations here acceptable," Ocampo said.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., chair of the House defense committee, said there was no harm in drawing up new Terms of Reference for Balikatan 02-2 "just to satisfy all sectors."

But he expressed support for all Balikatan exercises, saying they were boosting tourism and the economy in general.

Pichay estimated that the Americans could spend up to $1 billion during their stay in the country.

He told the INQUIRER that one US soldier could spend $1,000 a month, and that this would be "a shot in the arm of the Philippine economy."

Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada Jr., chair of the House foreign affairs committee, earlier said his committee and that of Pichay would resume the inquiry on the Balikatan.

But Pichay said he did not see the need for such an investigation.

Ocampo said he might ask the committees to conduct an inquiry even while Congress was on recess.

He told the INQUIRER in Central Luzon that the AFP "wants to take us for a ride: to accept the increasing and continuing presence of US troops in the Philippines."

He said, "a lot of facts are hidden from the public, and lies and disinformation are employed systematically, per the Pentagon's design."

Show of force

Sonia Soto, chair of the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya, said Balikatan 02-2 would be "a show of force, using Philippine territory as the point of US military projection in Asia."

To Prof. Roland Simbulan of the University of the Philippines, the exercise was "the start of long and direct intervention by the US in the counter-insurgency war."

Frank Mangulabnan, chair of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Pampanga, said the Balikatan exercises were aimed at "quelling people's and liberation movements opposing US imperialist globalization programs."

Bayan and KPD said they would hold protest actions at the gates of Clark in Pampanga and Subic in Zambales, both sites of former US military bases, to stop the holding of the Balikatan.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, warned that the United States' plan to deploy more troops was in line with its intention to maintain a permanent presence in the Philippines.

He said this was part of its bigger plan to wage war directly against the communist New People's Army and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, against whom, he said, US psywar experts were orchestrating a propaganda drive.

"They hope to taint the integrity of revolutionary forces and depict them as terrorists and criminals," he said.

Rosal claimed that the planned deployment of more US troops had been previously agreed upon by the administrations of US President George W. Bush and President Macapagal-Arroyo, contrary to the latter's claim that the proposal had yet to reach her desk.

"They are in fact only preparing the legal justifications," Rosal said.

Unholy alliance

"Running priest" Fr. Robert Reyes said the Church seemed to have forged an "unholy alliance" with the Macapagal administration, citing as a sign the Malacañang-backed decision of the bishops to ban political rallies at the Edsa Shrine.

Reyes also said keeping silent while Philippine sovereignty was being trampled was not the way Christians should observe the Lenten season.

"At the very least, Church leaders should begin to ask questions like 'After a month, why are terrorists still free to roam Basilan?' and 'Why are they sending more American soldiers to Nueva Ecija? Is it to catch the Abu Sayyaf there?'" the priest said.

Reyes called on the faithful to reflect on the lessons learned by Filipinos from its past experience with US intervention.

"Juan de la Cruz is again being crucified on the cross willingly put up by the President herself," he said.

The militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya called on Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, head of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, to recall the CBCP's support of US military presence in the country.

Pamalakaya spokesperson Manolito Serrano said Quevedo should not allow the Church to be used as an instrument of the government in pushing the "US-led war of aggression."

He reminded the CBCP that the Church opposed the VFA in 1999. ***With reports from Juliet L. Javellana, Agnes E. Donato and Gerald G. Lacuarta in Manila; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Authorities . . .

From page A1

A para-military group professing religious lines, the H World Army caught the public's attention with the arrest of Royette Padilla, brother of movie actor Robin Padilla, for illegal possession of firearms. Padilla claimed he had weapons because he was a "general" in the H World Army.

May 1st marks the first anniversary of the siege on Malacañang by followers of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

A police intelligence official said they were looking into Ipfa's possible links with the Indigenous Federal State Army (Ifsa) that planted dud bombs in Cotabato recently.

When asked if the two groups were one and the same, he said: "It's easy to change names."

Communist group

Citing intelligence information, the official said that Ifsa belonged to the People's Communist Party in Central Mindanao, a breakaway group of the Republican Proletarian Army.

He added that Ifsa also maintained links with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, noting that its members have relatives who belong to the secessionist group. So far, the group has not engaged the military or police in any clashes.

The official voiced suspicions that Ipfa, like Ifsa, was planting improvised bombs in the metropolis "to make itself known" for future extortion activities.

"Once it has established a name, it could conduct extortion activities in local communities. That's how I see it," he said.

Not sure

The source said the Ifsa did not fit into any of the "ideological" or "religious" terrorist profiles, but hinted at its "political" motives. "We are not sure which side of the political spectrum it is coming from," he said.

Leandro Mendoza, Philippine National Police Director General, who presented a progress report on the Ifsa, had established only one fact: that the bombs were meant to scare, but not to harm anyone.

Mendoza said that components of the dud bombs recovered, such as the rifle grenades, were part of the military ordnance but said these were also used by the MILF, Moro National Liberation Front and the New People's Army.

"The PNP, as of Wednesday night, had no suspect or leads or motives. All they have is an analysis on the equipment used, the circuits and the batteries and the wiring," the source said.

The Philippine Army admitted that it knew nothing about the group that had been planting bombs in Metro Manila.

Government elements

In the House of Representatives, Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said the bomb scare could be the handiwork of "government elements" out to scare away people from attending "peaceful rallies and demonstrations" to be launched on May 1 by supporters of Estrada.

Padilla and Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said the bomb scare could be instigated by government elements so as to justify the current operations against terrorism.

Ocampo found it "incredible" that a group claiming to advocate a federal system of government would resort to violence to promote its program.

"It could be directed against the government or even used by elements to justify the presence of experts against terrorism here," Ocampo said.

He said that the bomb scare could be done by "elements out to support the propaganda" of FBI chief Robert Mueller, who was in the country recently that al-Qaida terrorists might seek refuge in the Philippines.

Padilla, who is in favor of a federalist system of government, said it would be unfortunate if the group advocating federalism was behind the bomb scare.

"Federalism requires constitutional amendments. It cannot be achieved by planting a bomb," he said. ***With a report from Martin P. Marfil***

DFA accused of creating 'artificial shortage'

From page A1

Bangko Sentral uses security paper to print the booklets, charging the DFA P132 per passport. The DFA sells each one for P650.

Gratela said the alliance would picket the DFA today to protest the manipulation.

"They never increased the daily quota (of passports). So, how can there be a shortage? Day in and day out, the DFA will turn away applicants as early as 10 a.m. only (for them) to be told to line up again the following day. The lineup system has been very chaotic for the past two years and now they tell us the long queue was caused by the shortage of passports?" Gratela said.

Unusual upsurge

DFA spokesperson Victoriano Lecaros had blamed the shortfall on what he called the "unusual upsurge" in the number of Filipinos seeking employment abroad, but yesterday Gratela said the DFA would have to be "stupid and blind" not to notice the consistent uptrend in OCW deployment.

"How can the DFA not know the trend when for the past two years, the people have been complaining that they line up from 4 a.m. and the processing counters close at 10 a.m. because the daily quota of 2,000 for individual applicants and 1,500 for travel agencies are already met?" Gratela asked.

Lecaros confirmed that the P4-billion Machine Readable Passports and Visas (MRPV) system would finally be implemented this year. The DFA had awarded the contract to BCA International in 1999, but after BCA changed its corporate name to Philippine Passport Corp., a rebidding was ordered. The system is a build-operate-transfer project.

With MRPV in place, Lecaros said, the long queue at the back of the DFA annex would disappear, because the new system would take only five minutes to process a new passport as against the usual three days. At present, the name, address and other important particulars on the passport cover are handwritten, he said. Once these are automated, the processing would move "very fast."

"The MRPV passports will (also) be tamper proof," Lecaros said.

Daily average

Citing Philippine Overseas Employment Administration records, Gratela said the daily average in the number of applicants seeking employment abroad increased in the last two years from 2,500 to 2,700.

A memorandum from POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said as much, pegging the daily average at 2,643.

The data used in the "Daily OFW Deployment Report," taken by labor assistance centers in the international airports of Manila, Cebu and Davao, was prepared by POEA planning director Nimfa de Guzman.

Sto. Tomas, Baldoz and De Guzman were not available for comment. Dan Alcantara, a planning officer who helped draft the report, declined to make explicit comparisons between this year's figures and those from the equivalent period a year ago. "We have no comparative figures yet. But we are working on it," he said, promising to come up with a report after the Holy Week break.

He added that Baldoz asked them to do a daily comparative report only yesterday.

Migrante's Gratela said DFA officials might consider P650 per passport a pittance, but an applicant's costs in coming to Manila and paying for a place to stay while waiting for a new passport were "great."

"Before they come to Manila to apply for passports, they borrow money from the 5-6 (loan shark) operators," Gratela said in mixed English and Filipino. "Interest piles up every day. Now, instead of three days, they have to wait eight days to get their passports. The government can be so cruel."

What makes matters worse, he added, is that those who apply for work abroad sometimes lose the opportunity because of the delay in the release of passports.

Gratela said migrant workers abroad were also "disappointed" with the way Philippine embassies and consular offices were handling their passport problems.

4 more bombs found

From page A1

Western Police District-Explosives and Ordnance Division. He said the blue powder, "which was intended to be used as the main charge," was not an explosive.

Bomb expert SPO4 Jojo Capacete said that the 40-mm cartridge could not explode "unless fired from a rifle or a machine gun."

The bombs found in Caloocan and Cotabato City were similarly constructed. They consisted of rifle grenades, batteries and timing devices.

Thursday's find came after "bombs" were discovered in Makati Monday night and Tuesday, and at the Metro Rail Transit stations in the Ortigas station in Pasig City and the Kamuning station in Quezon City on Wednesday. Bombs were also found at the Gaisano Mall in General Santos City Wednesday night.

Dialogue

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the government was open to a dialogue with the Ipfa, the group responsible for the bomb scare.

"We are ready to talk to them especially if their agenda is really political," Golez said in Filipino during an interview over dzRH.

Golez said these people "aren't really malevolent who will hurt anyone" because the bombs they planted were designed not to explode. "They're just calling attention to themselves," he said.

Golez said that while law enforcers were pursuing leads, "we have no idea yet who they are and the people behind them because this is the first time we heard about such a group."

He said it was possible that the Ipfa was a fictitious group and that "its name is being used only to give color to their message."

In Cotabato City, a note attached to the bomb found at around 8 a.m. at a busy roadside near a pawnshop did not come from the Ipfa.

Lumad army

It came from the Christian Lumad Liberation Army (CLLA). The note in English read: "We do it because we want the government to know that we are capable of doing it." Like Ipfa, the CLLA wants a federal state in Mindanao.

Capt. Ferdinand Escalante, chief of the 6th Infantry Division's Explosives and Ordnance Disposal Team, said the explosives were fashioned out of 40 mm shells and fitted with a battery-operated timing device and blasting caps.

Unlike officials in Manila, Escalante said the bombs were meant to harm people. "They were planted in populated areas. It means the suspects wanted to inflict injuries," he said.

Last week, a similar explosive was found and disarmed at the main gate of the Catholic-run Notre Dame University. Ipfa claimed responsibility for the bomb.

Last month, improvised bombs exploded near radio station dxMY in Cotabato City and Radio dxND in Kidapawan City. The Ipfa said it was responsible for the explosions.

In General Santos City, the police and military have been placed on high alert following the discovery of an improvised bomb inside a shopping mall on Thursday evening.

SPO4 Edgar Balofinos, head of the police's bomb disposal unit, told reporters that the bomb, the size of a make-up kit, was found by a security guard of Gaisano Shopping Center at around 7:10 p.m.

The guard brought the bomb outside the building before reporting it to the police. Balofinos defused the bomb, which consisted of TNT powder, electrical wire and a 9-volt battery.

He said the bomb was intended to scare people, not harm them, as it had no shrapnel. But it was enough to start a fire. No group claimed responsibility for the bomb.

In Manila, Reynaldo Wycoco, National Bureau of Investigation director, said his men were checking the "origin" of the explosives to determine if the Ipfa was indeed behind the current scare.

"We're checking this federalist group. It's something very new. Anyone can hide behind the cloak of any name. What's important is to get to the personalities behind this," Wycoco said.

He said NBI agents were checking the serial numbers of the rifle grenades and other ammunition that the police had recovered.

The bomb found in Manila was contained in a large brown envelope with the markings "To the People of the Republic of the Philippines" written on it. Below was written "Federalism." And at the center of the envelope, someone wrote "C/O Supreme Court."

A certain "RSD Andrev" signed the Ipfa manifesto and leaflet found beside the bomb.

Remain calm

Justice Secretary Hernani Perez asked the public to remain calm because the bombs found in Metro Manila were deliberately fashioned not to hurt people.

"We found that these bombs are not intended to explode and will not explode and therefore the intention is to scare people," Perez told reporters in Bacolod City.

Amid the bomb scare, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza ordered the city police to heighten security in public areas and other vital installations in the capital.

Heeding the mayor's call, Pasinos, WPD director, has ordered the deployment of 200 plainclothes policemen to secure vital installations around the capital.

In Makati City, the National Capital Region Police Office has fielded 330 additional policemen to protect the business district. They will conduct foot and mobile patrols.

For his part, Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay advised all building administrators and owners to be on alert for suspicious-looking individuals and packages.

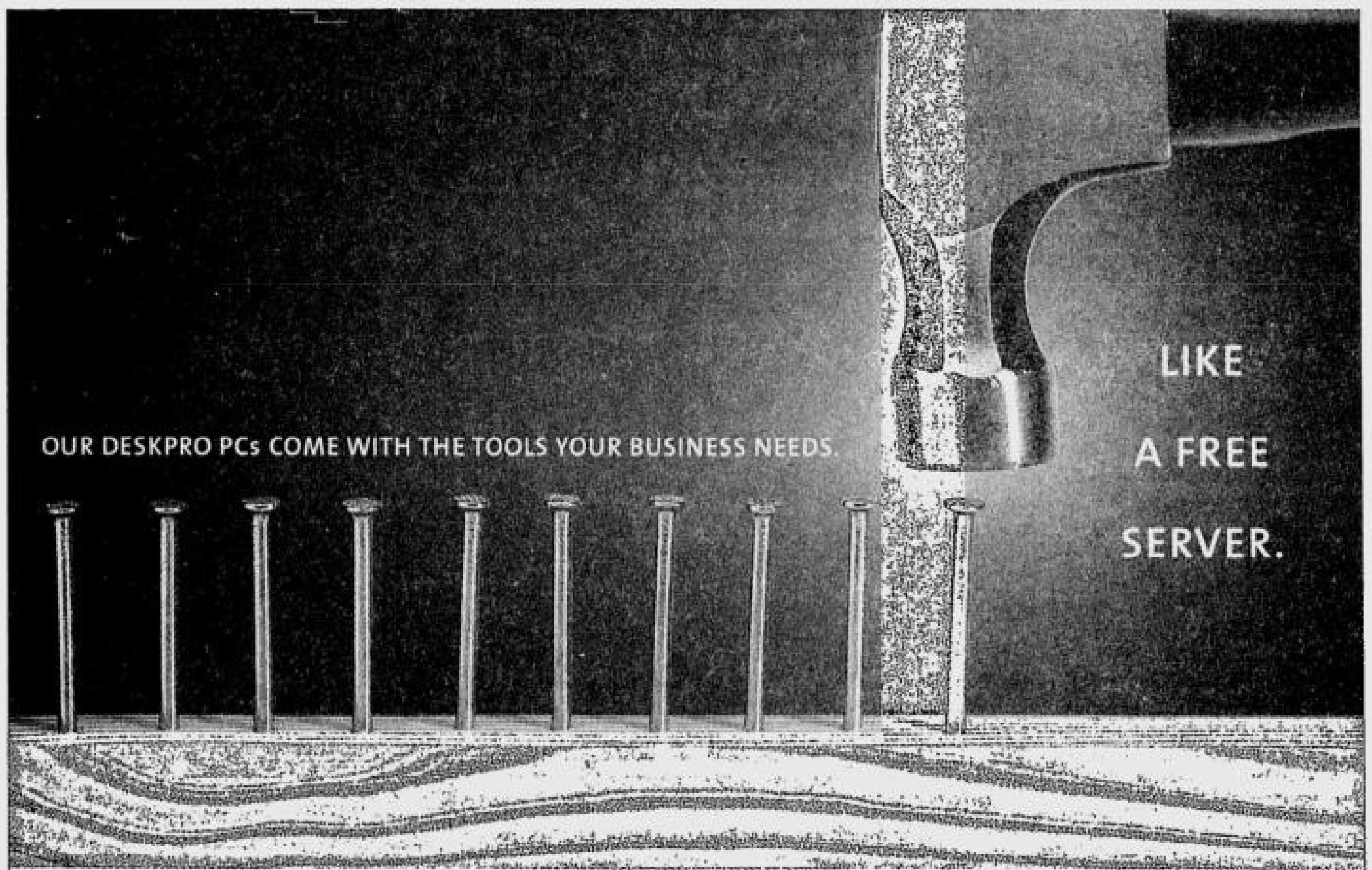
The Northern Police District also deployed additional policemen at public places in the Camanava (Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) area, particularly in the Monumento and the LRT stations. ***With reports from Carlito Pablo, Jerome Aning and Alcuin Papa in Manila; and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Business as usual

IT'S BUSINESS as usual for the business community despite the series of bombs found, including one at the heart of the Makati Central Business District.

Makati Business Club executive director Guillermo Luz said businessmen shrugged off the bomb discoveries in Metro Manila as they remained confident of the authorities' ability to repel alleged destabilization efforts against the government.

"We believe that this is a challenge for the military and police to tighten their security and increase their visibility in public places," Luz said. He added that the best way to promote stability was to keep the economy growing. ***Gil Cabacungan***



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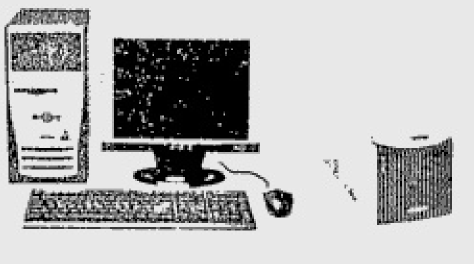

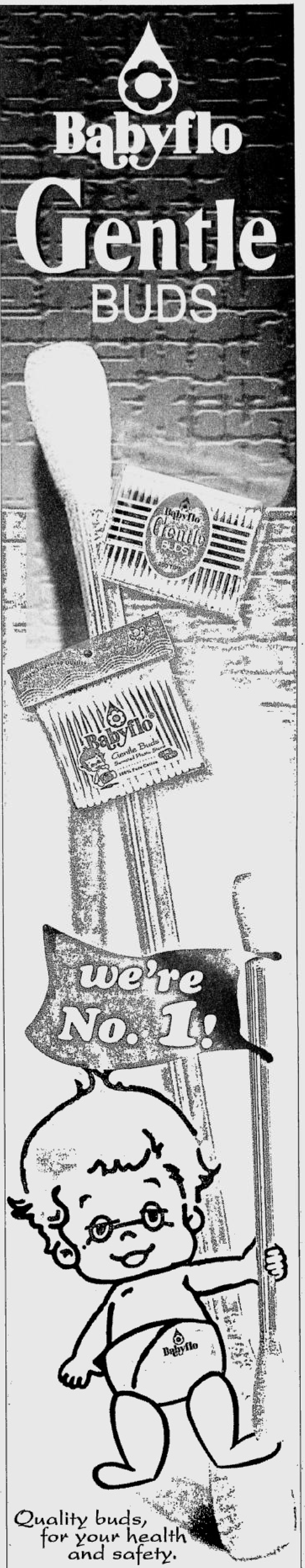

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Beñales tops GameworX 4WD race

JUN Beñales beat 400 rivals to win the March President's Cup mini 4WD race recently at the GameworX in Festival Supermall in Filinvest, Alabang. Beñales earned P5,000 in defeating Efren Macatangay and Darwin Santiago, who finished second and third, respectively. The tournament was supervised by Christian Datol.

SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ *Assistant Editor* **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS ON TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Action at 8:30 a.m. (r – 8:30 p.m.) on ESPN

NBA—Minnesota Timberwolves vs Memphis Grizzlies at 9 a.m. (r – 9 p.m.) on ESPN

US NCAA—ACC Basketball Tournament, Championship at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Regatta slated April 3

LOCAL sailors are bent on beating their foreign counterparts as the 6th President's Cup Regatta organized by the Manila Yacht Club starts on April 3 in Batangas.

Competitors will compete for honors in five divisions—IRC Open Race, IRC ocean cruising (big boat), IRC cruising racer, cruiser and open multihull.

The event, which started with six boats in 1993, will be co-hosted by the Taal Lake Yacht Club.

Commodore Ray Ordoveza of the Manila Yatch Club will try to steer Karaoka, the 1998 open race champion, to first place against the likes of defending champion Stella, A Sydney 36 owned by Briton Fred Kidmonth. Another strong contender is Olympic yatchman Neil Pride's Hi-Fidelity, the second placer in 1999 and 2000.

Vivaldi of Doni Altura and Roberto Banares' Lethal Weapon will battle Cruiser race titleholder Jo de Ros of American George Hackett.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1991, Paeng Nepomuceno beat Jing Sablan, 214-158, while Bong Garcia defeated Cathy Solis, 206-172, to win the Masters titles in the 8th TBAP tenpin open championships at the Green Valley Country Club. Also today in 1993, the Philippines' women archers notched 234-points over the United States team to capture the team event of the 5th Arizona Cup at the Arizona State University Campus.

Alaska overpowers Hapee-RP

By June Navarro

ALASKA subdued an error-plagued Hapee-RP Team, 68-61, last night in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

The Aces, who sprang to life after a two-game losing streak, now earned the distinction of becoming the first team to beat the two national training pool. Alaska also beat Selecta-RP Team, 56-52, exactly a month ago in the same venue.

Davonn Harp, Rudy Hatfield, Marlou Aquino and Johnny Abarrientos emerged as culprits with their fumbling shows.

Aquino made a turnover, Harp muffed what looked like an easy shot and Hatfield rifled a miscalculated pass to Abarrientos as Hapee-RP absorbed its third defeat in seven games.

In between those boo-boos, Ron Riley and Rodney Santos buried two consecutive triples that enabled the Aces to tie their victims.

"It's a good thing to get a win after two horrendous and embarrassing losses," said Alaska coach Tim Cone, who heaped praises on outgoing import Muntrelle Dobbins.

Aware that a replacement was already at hand, Dobbins played his heart out as he showed the way for the Aces in the thick of the roller-coaster battle.

Cone announced that Dobbins, who is still recuperating from an injured knee, will be replaced by James Head, a 6-foot-7 inside operator.

The scores:

ALASKA 68—Dobbins 19, Gahol 17, Riley 13, Allado 10, Santos 7, Arigo 2, Walkvist 0.

HAPEE-RP 61—Cariaso 15, Harp 13, Abarrientos 9, Aquino 8, Camaso 7, Seigle 5, Hatfield 4, Reihl 4, Ritualo 0, Fernandez 0.

Quarters: 17-20; 40-37; 55-50; 68-61.

PBL is amateur, says GAB

By Dennis U. Eroa

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball League gained a huge, morale-boosting victory yesterday after the Games and Amusements Board finally declared the PBL an amateur league.

The landmark decision was penned by new GAB Chair Eduardo R. Villanueva and Commissioners Emmanuel B. Palabrica and Angel P. Bautista, overturning a GAB recommendation during the term of Dominador Cepeda declaring the country's premier amateur basketball league professional.

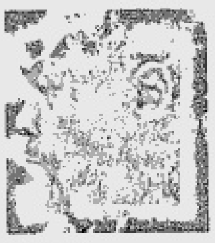
"By virtue of its adoption and implementation of the revised contracts and submission of other documents previously unavailable to the board, we strongly recommend that the PBL be considered now as an amateur basketball league," said the ruling, which has been forwarded to Malacañang for approval.

"We're grateful to the GAB and Malacañang for this new lease on life. We can now look forward and help in the development of the sport," said PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad, who worked tirelessly in contesting the GAB's earlier stand.

Graham Lim, secretary general of the BAP, also welcomed the ruling.

"It's about time the BAP and the PBL helped each other in uplifting the state of basketball. I am not rushing up things considering that we have a sour relation in the past. But for two groups loving the sport, everything can be forgotten," said Lim.

With Jordan back, Wizards win


JORDAN

DENVER—Michael Jordan had just seven points in his return from knee surgery yesterday, but Richard Hamilton scored 30 as the Wizards routed the Nuggets, 107-75.

Jordan, playing for the first time since having surgery on his right knee Feb. 27, made two of his first four shots before missing five straight. He was the fifth player off the Wizards bench, marking the first time since April 5, 1986 he played but was not in the starting lineup. Jordan finished 2-for-9 with two assists, two steals and a rebound in 16 minutes.

Washington has won three of four after losing five straight. The Wizards are 2 1/2 games behind Charlotte for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

OTHER RESULTS: Celtics 96, Cavaliers 70; Heat 82, 76ers 77; Nets 97, Trail Blazers 82; Spurs 108, Lakers 90; Hornets 94, Pacers 88. *AP*

Rotarians play today at Wack Wack West

THE 11TH Rotary World Golf Fellowship Invitational tournament will be held today at Wack Wack West.

Seeing action in the tournament are teams from RC East Rizal, Lipa, Biak na Bato, RC Angeles, Metro West and Quezon City.

RC East Rizal is the back-to-back defending champion in the tourney which stakes the prestigious Greeanmeadows Cup.

There will be a P50,000 prize for hole-in-one feats on the two par 3s, while silver trophies will be given to the team and individual winners.

Sponsoring the event are Fortune Tobacco, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Mercedes Benz, Export and Industry Bank, United States Postal Services, Paradise Garden Resort Boracay, Discovery Suites, Pan Pacific Hotel and Cats Motors.

Funds generated from the event will go to the construction and operation of the Youth Skills Training Center and other projects of the RC Greenmeadows Foundation.

Woods resumes campaign in $6-million Players event

WOODS FILE PHOTO

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—If you did not think The Players Championship was the PGA Tour's fifth major, just listen to Tiger Woods and Johnny Miller.

The six million-dollar marquee event gets under way today at the TPC Sawgrass, a course Woods calls potentially the most difficult on tour and where Miller has likened play to a car accident.

The sport's incomparable star, Woods captured last year's event by a stroke over Fiji's Vijay Singh but knows how difficult it is to win at Sawgrass, which has been compared to a US Open layout because of its narrow fairways, high rough and firm greens.

"If it's hard and fast, it's the toughest we'll play all year, without a doubt," said Woods, who is trying to become the first repeat winner in tournament history.

Woods also said a soft course would translate into receptive conditions, something that could come in handy at the par-three 17th, one of the most renowned holes in the world.

The "Island Hole" is the most entertaining on the course. It is 137 yards to a green surrounded by water, with wind playing havoc with the world's best players.

"Any golf hole you get to the tee and you think, 'Just hit it on the green,' from 150 yards, it has to be good," said Spanish star Sergio Garcia, who has not finished better than 48th in two starts here. "It gets around your head."

The 17th is not the only hole players have to worry about. The 7,093-yard course is surrounded by water hazards, including the par-four 14th, which cost Singh the tournament last year.

"The key is to keep it out of the water at the end of the golf tournament, try to make a par or two and not make any mistakes," said David Duval, a Ponte Vedra resident who won this event in 1999. "Pretty simple."

"The Players is fun for the viewers at home because we alternate between car accidents and really pretty shots," added former PGA golfer Miller, who is now a network television analyst. "TPC at Sawgrass provides a lot of excitement that way."

Pretty shots should abound, especially since the tournament includes 48 of the top 50 players in the world. Combine the field with the course and the six million-dollar purse and you get the tour's unofficial fifth major. *AFP*

Cantada Sports Center sets clinics

THE CANTADA Sports Center will hold golf, boxing and Olympic pistol clinics from April to May, Edgardo "Boy" Cantada announced.

Gerard Cantada, the sophomore pro, will conduct the junior golf clinic while his sister, Therese, the national record holder for air pistol, will take care of the shooting clinic. "Boxing lessons will be provided by professional boxers," said Boy Cantada.

For inquiries, call 837-0795.

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Nestlé BEAR BRAND Kitefest 2002

FLIGHT UPDATES

THE BEST OF DAVAO CITY:

ELEMENTARY DIVISION - FLAT KITE CATEGORY		
1st Prize	Erik Datuin	Hala Bira
2nd Prize	Michaela Conejos	Egyptian Kite
3rd Prize	Marvin Lopez	Bird of Paradise
HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION - FLAT KITE CATEGORY		
1st Prize	Juan Docot	White Butterfly 2003
2nd Prize	Niño Manese	White
3rd Prize	Mudz Pangilan	Malaysia
COLLEGE DIVISION - GEOMETRIC KITE CATEGORY		
1st Prize	Alvin Planas	D' Horse and Vinta Geometric Kite
2nd Prize	Michael Lanclan	Egyptian Pyramid
3rd Prize	Christopher Parilio	The Waterhorse and Save the Earth
ADULTS DIVISION - GEOMETRIC KITE CATEGORY		
1st Prize	Ronel Paradello	Garbo Sa Davao
2nd Prize	Jimmy Pangilan	Octagon Made in Mall
3rd Prize	Carlito Abado	Flying London Bridge
COLLEGE DIVISION - FIGURE KITE CATEGORY		
1st Prize	Lolong Menoza	The Goldfish
2nd Prize	Dan David	Sipag Ni Islaw Kalabaw
3rd Prize	Jonathan Lao	Killer Snake
ADULTS DIVISION - FIGURE KITE CATEGORY		
1st Prize	Michael Piquero	England Horse
2nd Prize	Joel Caldia	White Horse
3rd Prize	Monching Abado	Pavo Kite
SARANGGOLA NI BEAR BRAND		
Elementary	John Cader	Small Butterfly
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SUPERKITE AWARD		
	Rodrigo Ibarat	The Grandfather Rooster

Watch out for BEAR BRAND Kitefest 2002!
Happening next at the Melvin Jones Field,
Baguio City on April 7, 2002.

Pasay to host derby tonite

A GRAND showdown of big-time cockers is expected tonight with the staging of 60 fights at the Pasay City Cockpit. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Hammer Dewormer.

At stake in the event to be hosted by veteran bet taker Renato Shio is P300,000. Entry fee is P10,000.

Early favorites include the entries of Louie Cua, Peping Suarez, Muroy Dolorico, Vic Yu, Tony Lasala, Ucap president Butch Macasaet, Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud, ESM ruel, Cito Manansala, Daday Siochi, Joey Lapid, Joel Fernando, Arnel Pimentel, Dindo and Mon Torres.

Meanwhile, pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano announced that there will be no derby on March 29, Good Friday. For other inquiries, call 816-6750, 1890 and 843-1746.

Solo champ at Araneta

NEWCOMER Pasay UMA stole the spotlight late Wednesday night by scoring 5-1/2 points and emerging solo champion of the NCA (National Cockers Association) 7-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum.

Fielded by Cong. Montilla and Ramon Mansenares, Pasay UMA narrowly beat three other veteran campaigners who posted five points.

These were BL Laura of battle-tested Boy Lechon and Louie Cua, Combine-Harvester of Ed Ledesma and friends and unpredictable Dada SL Gapan of Seigfrey Linsangan.

With 4-1/2 points were Thunderbird Firefly I of Big Dome owner Nene Araneta, Mulawin of Frank Berin, Rep. Rudy Albano and R&B Farm I of Rep. Claude Bautista and Boyboy Roa.

Scoring 4 points each were Firefly Thunderbird 8 of Ram Lopez and the Firefly Group, Winning Time DVH-Jobo I of Lito Orillaza and Gov. Ito Ynares, Jinfer of Meycauayan Mayor Eddie Alarilla and Pampanga's famous Jingco brothers, Spencer Winslet of William Co, Fantastic Kalvin of Alan Tan and Mulawin Argem Coliseum of Pico Berin and Rudy Albano.

Meanwhile, the next NCA 7-Cock Derby will be held on April 1 and 3, with Boy Primallon and Kano Daniel as hosts.

Dayrit: Let us work, not fight

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DAYRIT

PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit yesterday appealed to all national sports association heads to focus on the hosting of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games instead of engaging "in bickering and infighting."

Dayrit made that plea during the POC general assembly attended by at least 32 NSA heads in a Makati café where they also talked about the Busan Asian Games preparation, the country's hosting of the 2005 SEA Games and the legality of former basketball head Freddie Jalasco's stint in the POC board.

"I think we have realized the importance of what we are all looking forward to," said Dayrit, flashing the letter from Malacañang as proof of the country's decision to accept the SEAG hosting signed by no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo. "In 1991, only the executive secretary signed the acceptance letter, now it's the President herself.

"We can have differences but the important thing is that we know the procedures and we follow the by-law and constitution," said Dayrit, referring to the questions raised against Jalasco by athletics chief Go Teng Kok which was supported by a handful of NSA chiefs.

Go stressed that Jalasco's slot in the powerful POC executive board must be declared vacant "because he no longer has an NSA to represent."

Go's stand was backed by Literal, judo's Reynaldo Jaylo, volleyball's Louie Gepuela, and triathlon and Asiad chief of mission Tom Carrasco, who also took the stand to defend Go's position.

But Dayrit and POC chair Robert Aventajado turned down the motion.

Quoting the POC by-laws, Aventajado said 2/3 of the 36 regular POC members (or 24 NSAs) must sign the motion and it takes the votes of ¾ of the regular members (27 NSAs) to oust a fellow POC member.

Dayrit said the filing of petition must be done in an "extraordinary" meeting and not in a general assembly.

Jalasco maintained that he's a legitimate member of the board because at the time he was elected, he was still the BAP chief. He said he intends to finish his term ending 2004 because he said he has not committed "anything wrong."

Dayrit also announced that the athletes vying for slots in the Asian Games in September could reach 165 in July when all the qualifying events are concluded.

Volleyball course set next month

THE DEPARTMENT of Physical Education Recreation and Sports of the Technological University of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association, will conduct a National Volleyball Referee Course (April 1-6) and Coaching Course (April 8-13) at IRTC Bldg., Technological University of the Philippines, Ayala Blvd., Ermita, Manila.

For inquiries call, 522-5924, 838-7216 or 526-8438.

Elorde's legacy

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

A FORMER bootblack in Bogo, Cebu, Gabriel "Flash" Elorde rose to become the most celebrated Filipino boxer in Philippine sports history, earning universal acclaim by successfully defending his world Boxing Council junior lightweight crown for a record-setting 10 times in a span of eight years, the longest ever in the 130-lb division. Elorde won the WBC title by stopping American Harold Gomes in the seventh round at the jampacked Araneta Coliseum on March 16, 1960.

Elorde's early years promised nothing lofty. A southpaw, Elorde beat little-known boxers in his native Cebu, but with his natural talent and humility, he was soon spotted by boxing impresario Lope "Papa" Sarreal, who charted his road to future fame and fortune. Papa also became Elorde's father-in-law when the God-fearing boxer married the manager's daughter, the college-educated Laura, who will lead her children in celebrating Elorde's birth anniversary on Monday, March 25, by hosting the annual Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Boxing Awards Night honoring Filipino champions, boxing groups and other personalities who contributed to the cause of professional boxing.

"Gabriel is the most dedicated boxer I know," Papa Sarreal once said of his son-in-law in an interview. "He'd be great as a pro." Papa was right.

Elorde racked up 11 straight stunning victories in Cebu City. In his debut, on June 16, 1951 Elorde knocked out Kid Gonzaga in the first round. He first fought as a bantamweight then moved up to the featherweight class and, much later, to the junior lightweight category where he scored some of his most stirring triumphs. He also tried his luck in the lightweight division, but he lost twice to the great Carlos Ortiz of Puerto Rico, first in Manila in 1965 and again in New York City in 1966, both by a pitiful TKO in the 14th round.

Elorde got the big breaks he needed on Jan. 18, 1956, when he fought world featherweight champion Sandy Saddler in a return bout for the championship at Cow Palace in San Francisco. The Filipino fighter earned the crack at the black American crown after Elorde beat Saddler in a non-title 10-round bout in Manila on July 20, 1955.

In that forgettable San Francisco title fight, Saddler, using all the dirty tricks in the books, "elbowed" his way to an undeserving victory, retaining the crown via a 13th TKO when the American champion opened up an ugly cut on the brittle eyebrow of the Filipino challenger.

After winning the junior lightweight crown from Harold Gomes at the Big Dome in 1960, Elorde lost the title to Japanese challenger Yoshiaki Numata in a 15-round match in Tokyo on June 15, 1967. He died of lung cancer on Jan. 2, 1985.

* * *

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044) 933-1214.

SPORTSWATCH

Bernardino at Scoop

PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino and Purefoods Hotdogs led by team manager Rene Pardo are guests in today's regular session of the Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines (Scoop) forum at the Kamayan West Avenue. Bernardino will talk on the progress of the two national teams in the PBA. Session starts at 10:30 and will be aired over Sports Radio 918 AM.

Billiards for fotogs

IT'S all systems go for the staging of the 1st San Miguel Beer-PBA Press Photgraphers Club 9-Ball Billiards Challenge today at the Marlon's Billiard in Timog Avenue, Quezon City. Participants include Manila Bulletin's Paulo Vecina and Ali Vicoy; Philippine Star's Joven Cagande and Jun Mendoza; Philippine Daily Inquirer's Romy Homillada; Manila Standard's Best Arman Clemente and Lino Santos; Malaya's Manolet Santiago, Oca Estabaya and Philip Duquiata; Bulgar's Cesar Panti and Muriel Leanillo; Remate's Jeff Venancio, Tempo's Ramon Samson; Text Tonight's Freddie Manalac and Tony Ang and many more.

Canlas gets backer

CANLAS

CHRISTIAN Canlas, who recently won the Manzano Cup, the Milo Junior Tennis Cup and the Cebu Mayor's Cup, got a big boost in his young career after Wilson decided to back him up in his future campaigns. The 12-year-old Canlas is in Grade 6 at the Ateneo Grade School and is a consistent honor student. He will compete in the coming Palarong Pambansa. Wilson general manager Jun Plana and sales manager Gerry Tan represented the tennis gear manufacturer during the endorsement signing.

RACING TIPS

At Santa Ana By Mr. 999

Race 1—1. Double Header 2. Modulo Queen 3. Star of Arabia
Race 2—1. Shape of the Wind 2. Witch Craft 3. Cardinal Rule 4. Doña Evelyn
Race 3—1. Happy Return 2. Perfect Lyza
Race 4—1. Something Silver 2. Time Essential 3. Fortune Maker 4. Waving Oscar 5. Courage Heart
Race 5—1. Far Out 2. Better Harry 3. El Campeon 4. Spirited Lady
Race 6—1. Borderline 2. The Magician 3. Celebration 4. Kaboom 5. Very Sharp
Race 7—1. The Mailman/Stradivarius 2. Jerold's Dream 3. King Cobra/Baptism of Fire 4. Flying Fortress 5. Dragon Doding
Race 8—1. Union City Boy 2. Tayp Ko Yan 3. Kissin Tzang 4. Cristel Jay
Race 9—1. Golden Prince 2. Exchange Deal 3. Hasty 4. Il Amorosa 5. Love Song 6. God is Good

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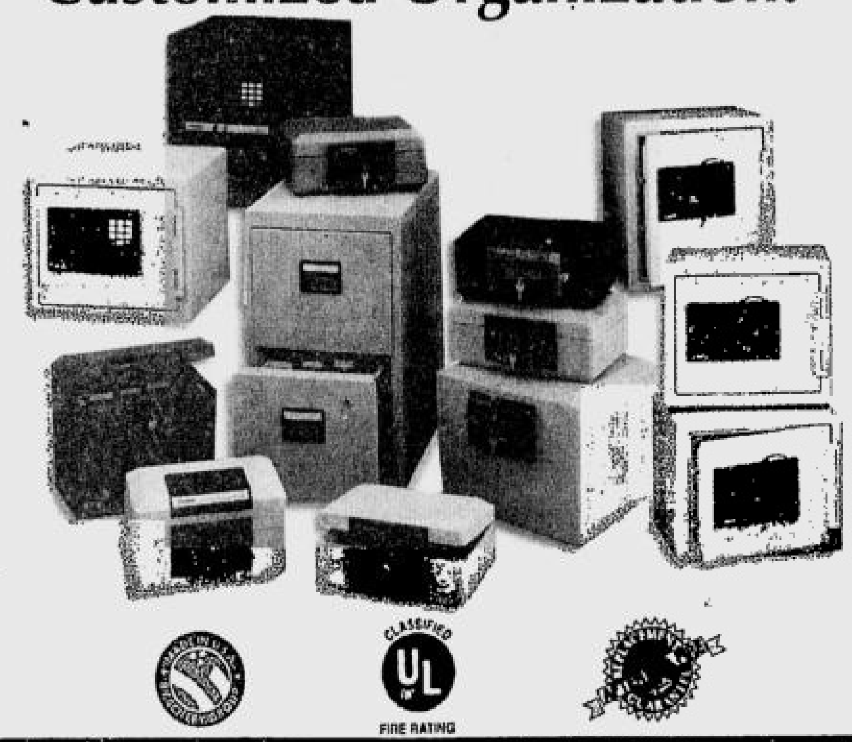

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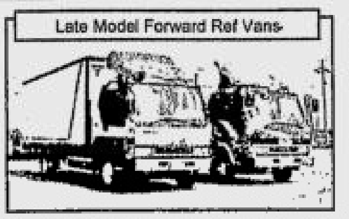
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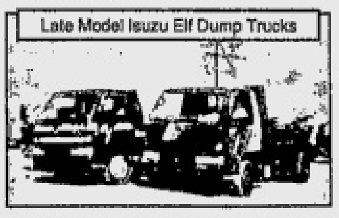
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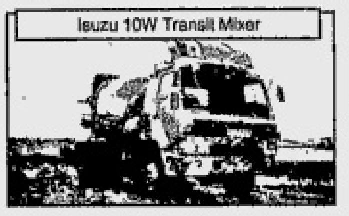
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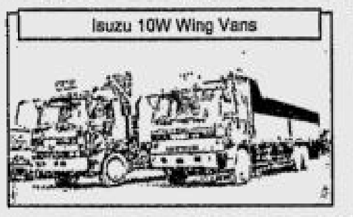
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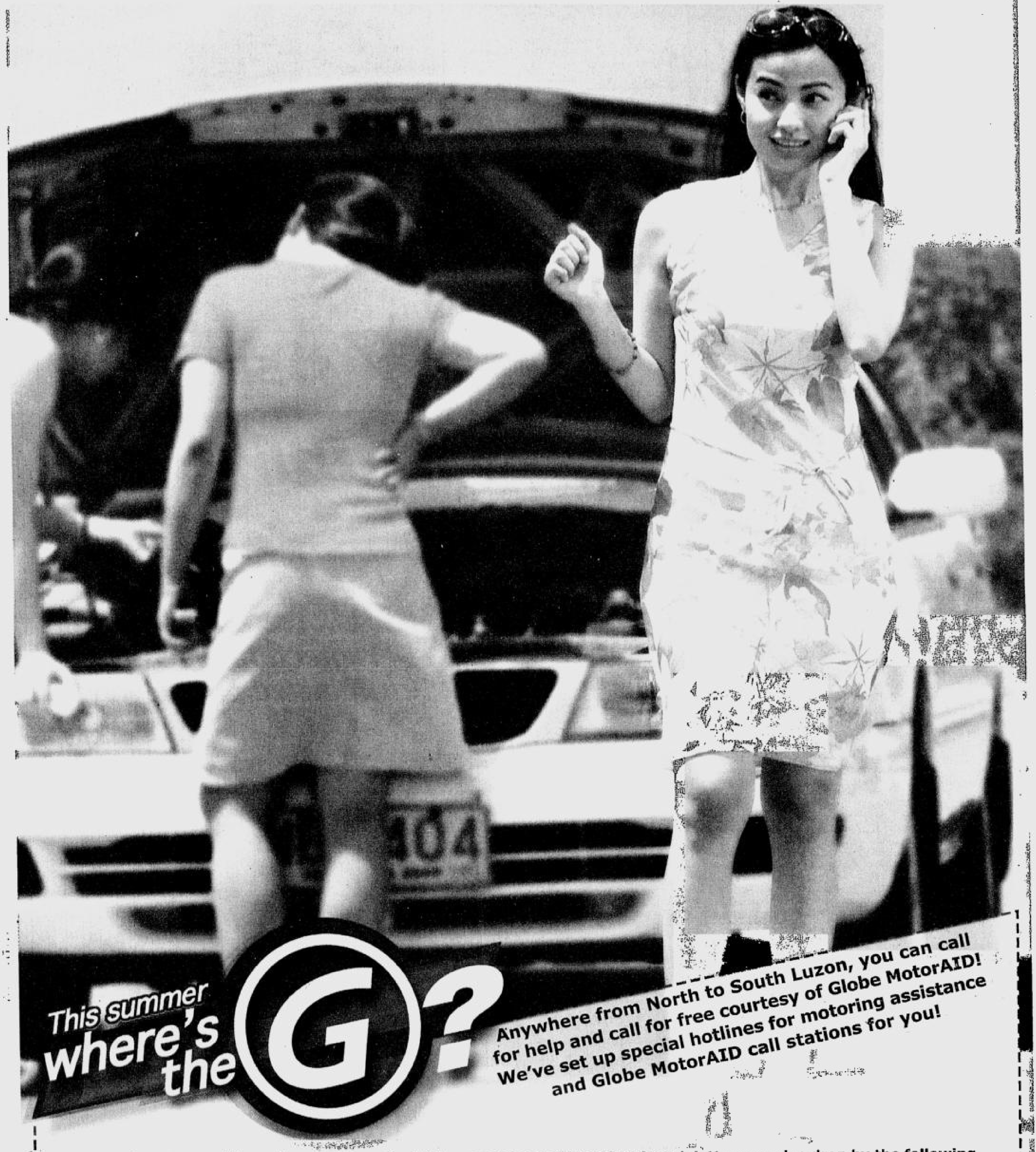

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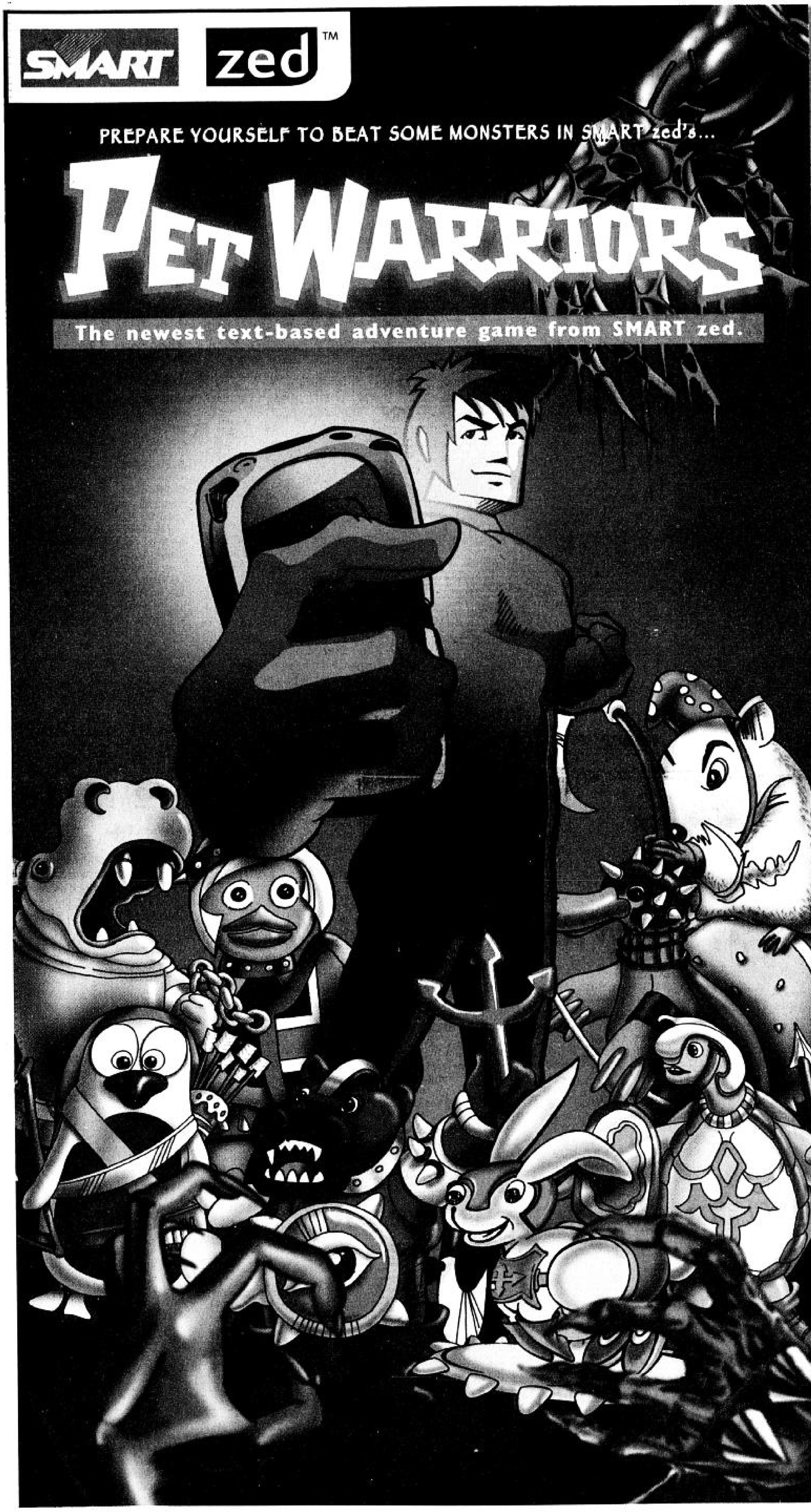
Nida's daughter impatient, but so are we, say probers /A26

Nayon gives way to Naia 3 /A26

Bare Eye /A26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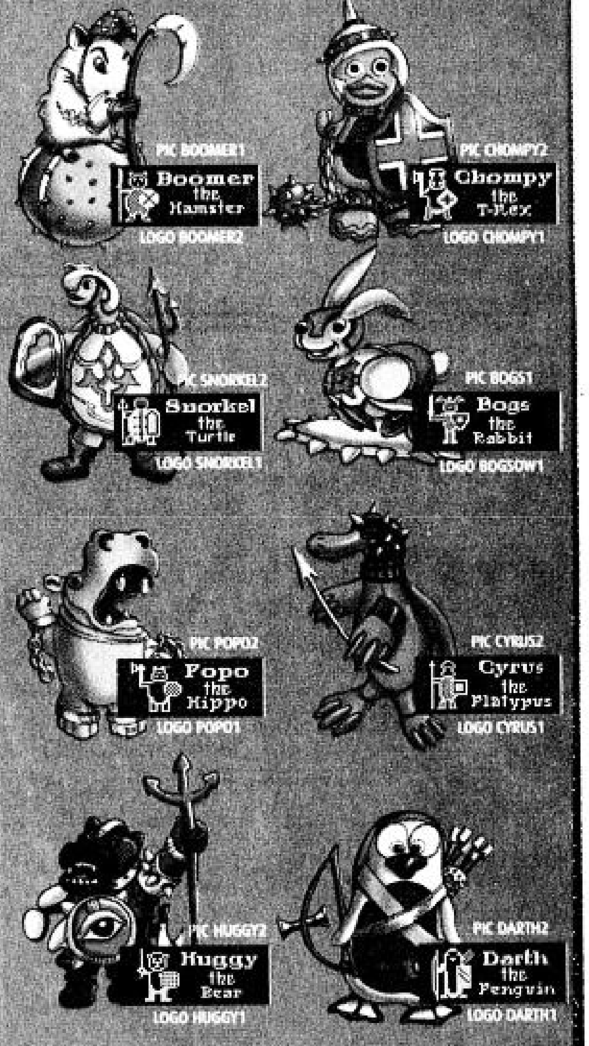
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CALTEX What Drives You

Wanted: 'Palit-Bigas' centers

MANILA Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing yesterday asked the city government to tap workers of garbage contractor Leonel Waste Management in implementing MMDA's "Palit-Bigas" program, where residents exchange recyclable garbage for rice or cash. He said exchange centers have not been set up in many communities because of lack of personnel. *Jerome Aning*

METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

No tuition hike at Miriam

DUE to the "difficult times," Miriam College is not increasing tuition and basic fees for school year 2002-2003, the school announced yesterday. It said it has taken steps "to cut costs and find alternative ways to strengthen its academic programs and augment its scholarship fund."

LRT takes 4-day break, but business as usual for MMDA

By Alcuin Papa and Abigail Ho

WHILE Metro Manila's railway systems will be taking a breather during the Holy Week, more than 3,000 traffic enforcers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority will be foregoing their Lenten vacation after the MMDA cancelled their leaves and deployed them in key areas in the metropolis.

The MMDA yesterday also announced that it is suspending the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program, or the "color-coding" scheme, from March 25 to April 1.

Most of the enforcers will be deployed on the North and South Luzon Expressways to keep the traffic moving. The two highways are expected to be jammed with motorists who are trooping to and from the provinces for the Holy Week.

On the other hand, the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3 and the Light Rail Transit will suspend operations starting Holy Thursday to implement mandatory system maintenance and repair.

"It won't be too much of a hassle as there are not that many commuters during Holy Week," LRT Authority administrator Teodoro Cruz Jr. said. "Most people are out of town or in their homes, so we're not expecting many riders."

Cruz said the maintenance checks and repairs on the railway tracks and on the trains are meant to ensure the safety of commuters when they ride the LRT trains again.

"We will take advantage of the holiday to work on the repairs and maintenance of the railway system," he said. "This will ultimately benefit the riding public in terms of safety and convenience."

The MRT-3 will resume operations on Easter Sunday, while the LRT will open its coaches a day after that.

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board said it will be relaxing franchise rules during the Holy Week to ensure there are ample buses for those commuting to and from the provinces.

In a statement yesterday, the LTFRB said special permits will be given to some provincial buses to allow them to operate outside their franchise areas to meet the inevitable spike in demand.

But the LTFRB and the Land Transportation Office will continue to enforce laws against smoke belching, overcharging of fares and refusing to take passengers.

The Department of Transportation and Communications will also open help desks in various bus stations to be manned by DOTC personnel as well as volunteers from non-government organizations.

For those traveling by water, the Philippine Ports Authority, Maritime Industry Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard will set up assistance centers in piers and ferry terminals.

The MMDA, along with the DOTC, LTO, Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police and Philippine National Construction Corp., will also implement "Oplan Sumvac" to assist motorists on the highways.

The MMDA's Metro Base will serve as the central communications and coordination center for "Oplan Sumvac." The Metro Base will be issuing traffic advisories to aid motorists.

Nida's daughter impatient, but so are we, say probers

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DAUGHTER of slain actress Nida Blanca, Kaye Torres, and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Reynaldo Wycoco have something in common: Both are getting impatient with the pace of investigation of Blanca's murder by the NBI.

"She's getting impatient, and so are we. We share the same feeling, we both want the case to be solved soonest," Wycoco said yesterday.

But Wycoco reassured her that the bureau is doing its best to solve the case.

He said that the NBI continuously informs Torres about developments in the case through her lawyer, former Commission on Elections chair Harriet Demetriou.

"Every new development is relayed to Demetriou," Wycoco said. "The information is passed (on to Torres) also. (We have assured her) the NBI is not stopping the investigation."

TORRES

WYCOCO

On Saturday, Torres, who arrived this week from the United States, will get a full briefing about the case, according to Wycoco.

Wycoco reiterated that the NBI has unearthed new leads in the investigation, but are keeping mum about them until there are concrete results.

Earlier this month, Wycoco said the bureau already has a suspect in the killing, but he declined to give details since the investigation is not yet finished.

He also admitted that the case was "quite difficult" to solve and that the NBI is again "comparing notes" with the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), the police unit that tried to solve the murder.

The NBI took over as the lead agency in the investigation after the CIDG's main witness, Philip Medel, recanted his confession that he killed the actress upon the orders of Blanca's husband Rod Strunk.

Wycoco said the NBI is following up some leads that the CIDG first discovered.

"They (CIDG) stumbled on some correct leads. Our men also found leads that looked similar to those (uncovered by the CIDG)," Wycoco said.

He said that the bureau does not have evidence that would link Blanca's murder to Strunk, who left the country for the US in January because of his ailing mother, who has since died.

Strunk's lawyers made a written promise that their client would return should the NBI find incriminating evidence against him, Wycoco said.

Blanca was found dead on Nov. 7 last year inside her car, which was in the parking lot of the Atlanta Centre building on Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan. The actress was a member of the Movie Television Review and Classification Board, which had offices in the building. She was seen alive about 5 p.m. on Nov. 6.

2 women die in Taguig, Pasay fires

By Christian V. Esguerra

TWO WOMEN died in two fires—one in Pasay City and the other in Taguig.

Liza Ensinas, 36, live-in partner of retired Navy personnel Andres Nad, 41, was burned beyond recognition in a fire that razed their house on 4th Street, Zone 1-C in Taguig on Wednesday night, said Insp. Virgilio dela Paz.

Huge flames coming from their kitchen woke up the couple, but Ensinas refused to leave the burning house, Nad told investigators.

In Pasay, Rhodora Eusebio, 46, died in a fire that nearly wiped out about 150 houses in Don Carlos Village at 5:54 a.m. yesterday, said FO3 Renato Recto.

No one knew exactly where and how the fire started, investigators said.

The fire damaged about P5 million worth of property.

Bank cashier accused of P1.2M fraud

By Alcuin Papa

AN EMPLOYEE of the Philippine Bank of Commerce was hauled to jail yesterday after he was accused of defrauding the bank's branch in Makati City of P1.2 million.

Edilberto Magsambol, 44, of 1013 Mendiola Extension, Paco, Manila has been with the PBComm branch on Herrera Street corner Ayala Avenue in Makati City for 10 years. He was a cashier at the time of his arrest.

The bank's manager Cesar de Guzman, 47, said the anomaly was uncovered after an audit last Monday.

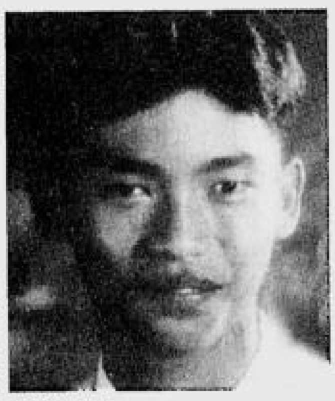
De Guzman told Makati City police that they discovered Magsambol was skimming off cash in each of his transactions.

He said the fraud went unnoticed because Magsambol was taking only small amounts, which reached P1.2 million.

The bank's security video also caught Magsambol in the act of pocketing small amounts of money after every transaction, said De Guzman.

After collating the pieces of evidence, De Guzman filed a complaint before Makati City Police who arrested Magsambol while he was working yesterday morning.

Magsambol is now under detention and undergoing interrogation about the alleged fraud.



ANCHETA

Missing

HAS anybody seen Alexander Ancheta?

Alexander, 19, of 190 Sixth St., Fortune 5, Valenzuela City, went to school last Feb. 28 and never returned home.

In a letter to the Inquirer, his father Arnel described Alexander as 5-foot-7, about 130 pounds, black-haired, brown-skinned, of medium build and right-handed.

Anyone who has information about Alexander may call his father Arnel at 291-7394.

Nayon gives way to Naia 3

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE NAYONG Pilipino management yesterday announced that the theme park will be "closed to the public" not later than April 15 to give way to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 project.

According to the theme park's executive director Charito Planas, the Manila International Airport Authority has already agreed to pay Nayong Pilipino P500 million as part of a "compensation package" for the use of the park's 8.6-hectare property.

The amount was the final item in a memorandum of agreement, which the Naia and Nayong Pilipino need to sign before they can close the park, according to Planas.

In a letter to Planas dated March 15, Miaa general manager Edgardo Manda said the airport management decided to offer the amount so that the Miaa can push through with the construction of a parallel taxiway on Nayong Pilipino property.

Airport officials earlier proposed P300 million for use of the property.

Under Manda's proposal, the Miaa will pay within the year P300 million, P75 million of which will be released upon the signing of the MOA.

The remaining P200 million will be paid until 2006, at P50 million a year.

Planas yesterday said the proposed compensation was acceptable to the Nayong Pilipino management.

"We are now waiting for the draft of the MOA being prepared by Naia," she said. "We expect the park will be closed to the public not later than April 15."

With the impending closure of the theme park, employees fear they might lose their jobs for good and not receive proper compensation.

Quoting the Civil Service Commission, Planas said: "Security of tenure is not available when there is a cause.

"The closure of the Nayong Pilipino is a valid cause, resulting in the separation of employees."

The park employees are pushing for a compensation package equivalent to three month's pay for every year of service.

But Planas said the park management can only provide a package with a base amount equivalent to one-and-a-half month's salary.

Muntinlupa courts get five more judges

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE SUPREME Court has appointed five additional regional trial court judges in Muntinlupa to ease the backlog of cases in the city.

The new judges—Pedro Sabundayo, Juanita Guerrero, Myrna Verano, Patria de Leon, and Philip Aguinaldo—will provide support to Judge Alberto Lerma and Norma Perello, RTC executive judge.

Prior to the appointments, the city had only two RTC judges with Perello handling heinous crimes and Lerma, civil and criminal cases including corporate offenses.

In a press statement, Perello said Muntinlupa also needs additional judges for the Municipal Trial Courts.

The city, she said, has only one MTC judge and an associate court that currently handle 25,000 cases consisting mostly of violations of the Bouncing Check Law and ordinances.

Perello is also requesting the construction of a courthouse that would accommodate the RTCs, MTCs, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the Public Attorneys Office.

Reactions to Da Flash and Da Zone

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

WAS it a Saturday or a Friday when they inaugurated the Araneta Coliseum 42 years ago?

Take your pick.

But before you even think of dividing the house, stop and listen to what reader Ernesto C. Ignacio of Bonifacio Street in Flores, Malabon has to say.

"After reading your article on Monday, I checked with two computer programs the day Flash Elorde fought Harold Gomes at the new Araneta Coliseum," he writes. "To my surprise, it was a Wednesday!"

To back his claim, Mr. Ignacio sent a printed copy of the March 1960 calendar ("for your reference").

It was a stunner. But no proof could be clearer.

March 16, 1960 indeed fell on a Wednesday.

Perhaps another way to check, suggests our concerned sports fan, is to consult a perpetual calendar.

He adds that it will be better to get hold of a copy of the March 17, 1960 issue of the old Manila Times (then the leading national daily) or any newspaper of that time.

The UP Library in Diliman, Quezon City, he says, is a possible place to find the old issue.

***

Thank you very much, sir.

Let's just hope other sources would be kind enough to help us confirm the exact date of that historic event.

Of course, we trust that the calendar page sent by Mr. Ignacio was both correct and authentic.

Still, looking back, it baffles this reporter how and why a big international boxing card would be held middle of the week.

Generally, big boxing cards were staged hereabouts either on a Friday or a Saturday.

Remember that Laura, Flash Elorde's articulate wife, had surmised that her husband must have annexed the world crown on a Friday.

Lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, for his part, swore it was a Saturday.

Did Elorde cause the first ever Saturday Night Fever hereabouts? When people, all in the mood to jump and dance, just stayed alive, ha-ha-ha all night long?

The whole country, as evidenced by that calendar page, went truly merry on a mid-week.

I myself now sincerely feel March 16, 1960 must've indeed been a Wednesday.

But what the heck? The happy, historic, irrevocable truth is that, any day of the week, there's no denying that Elorde had touched off an unforgettable merrymaking all over the country with that explosive triumph of his.

***

Well, there's a separate reaction letter but this one is not about wrong dates.

It's not about Da Flash either, but specifically about Da Zone.

Yes the zone defense in basketball, a choking, exacting hardcourt weapon which I had described as poisonous.

Sorry, but the zone will most likely take the form and essence of a venom which members of the RP national team, whether they like it or not, have to take in the Asian Games.

The problem, as had been stated in a previous column here, is that our national players will be left to perfect playing the zone against opponents in the PBA who are themselves groping to study the same system.

***

"I fully agree with you that we form our national team PRONTO and that they face worthy opposition honed in the strict ways of the zone."

That reaction is from Antonio M. Te of Ramylu Village in Tangub, Bacolod City.

Otherwise, he continues, it will be too late.

"Remember, basketball is a team sport and the players must play as one. It takes time to blend the team to play as one. To become champion, it takes total team effort from coach, coaching staff, and players."

Thank you, sir. But will you help us and give further details about the zone?

"A zone defense is essentially designed to stop penetration and to control defensive rebound. Smaller teams employ zone defense to neutralize their opponents' edge in height. A solid zone defense is anchored on a sound defensive reaction system."

Is that all?

"A set 2-3 zone honed in individual defensive reaction and team defense will be very hard to penetrate and hard to beat. To beat an excellent zone honed in great individual defensive reactions and team defense, a good outside shooting team should know how to spread out the defense with quick ball and personnel movement that includes cutters, dribble penetrations, post-ups and slides into open areas. Beating the opponent through fast break before it can set its defense is a good option."

So what should our coaches do?

"I hope we can get their reactions. Coaches in the States meet every other month to exchange ideas. That is why they are that innovative. I honestly believe two or more heads are better than one."

Well said, sir. Kindly keep us posted.

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8 GOT 2 BELIEVE

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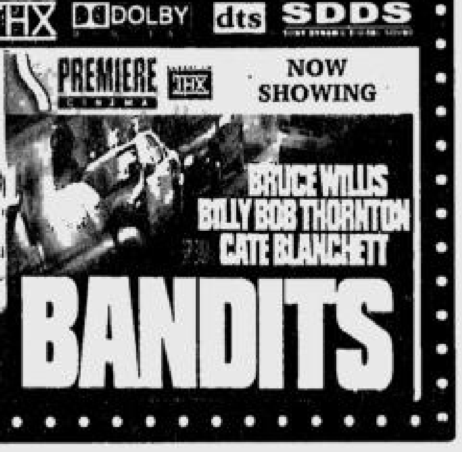

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Arduous journey

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN "THE SHIPPING News," **Kevin Spacey** plays an emotionally warped man who finally finds himself when his aunt (**Judi Dench**) takes him to their clan's original town in Newsfoundland. He discovers family secrets that help explain why his father was so troubled and unfeeling, and why he and his wife committed suicide in their sunset years.

At first, Spacey gets alienated by the cold, the weirdness of his fellow employees at the community newspaper, his fear of the water, and his unfamiliarity with his job as a reporter.

Slowly, however, he proves to his colleagues, and especially to himself, that he can make something of himself in his new world. This is quite an achievement, considering the fact that he's been left high and dry by his ditzy wife (**Cate Blanchett**), and his young daughter is having severe personality problems.

But filmmaker **Lasse Halstrom** shows Spacey's character coming into his own despite the town's inhospitable conditions. As he gets over his psychological problems, he impresses his boss by insisting on doing things his way, despite the opposition he gets from the traditional-minded or mean-spirited people around him.

"The Shipping News" may be short on plot, but it's long on textured, volatile characters and compelling themes. Indeed, Spacey is sometimes upstaged by Blanchett, **Rhys Ifans** and the other character actors who turn in vital ensemble work in this production.

As for Judi Dench, she pretty much keeps her cards close to her chest, but when she opens up, it's a shocker, because viewers discover that she's been keeping a deep, dark secret all these years.

The fourth big star in this movie is **Juliane Moore**, and she plays yet another troubled character, a woman who says she's a widow but turns out to be something else again.

Since she and Spacey have a lot of excess emotional baggage, it takes them the longest time to admit that they love each other.

When they do, however, Spacey experiences complete healing, since the will to love with all his heart is the most difficult lesson he must learn on his arduous journey toward emotional and spiritual wholeness.

Holy Week stories

THIS Holy Week, Jesuit Communications and PLDT invite viewers to share these stories of people who are struggling to be holy:

"May Call Waiting Ka Ba?" looks into religious vocations. Through interviews and vignettes, three priests, a brother and a nun share what their decision to consecrate their loves to God has meant to them. The production will be telecast on Holy Thursday, March 28 at 9:30 p.m. on GMA 7, and on Black Saturday, March 30 at 8 p.m. on RPN 9.

"Message Sent" explores the nature of mission. A Jesuit priest sent to Nigeria, a contemplative nun, a priest whose parish is on a mountain, and a Little Brother of Jesus share the stories of their missions. "Message Sent" will be telecast on March 29, Good Friday, at 9 p.m. on GMA 7 and on March 30, Black Saturday, at 8:30 p.m. on RPN 9.

"Your Dwelling Place" is a story told in song. It features the works of renowned—Jesuit composers like **Arnel Aquino, Manoling Francisco, Eduardo Hontiveros** and **Nemesio Que**, as well as songs by lay composers. "Your Dwelling Place" seeks to bring about the healing that is at the heart of Holy Week. It will be telecast on March 29, Good Friday, at 8 p.m. on GMA 7.

Movies on TV

ON HBO, Friday, March 22 at 8:15 a.m., "Mother Night." 10 a.m. "Dead in the Water." 2:15 a.m., "Missing."

Saturday, March 23 at 6 a.m., "Girl, Interrupted." 9:45 a.m., "The Godfather, 3." 12:30 p.m., "The Fugitive." 4 a.m., "Neil Simon's Brighton Beach Memoirs."

'Paco Park Presents'

BARITONE **Marvin Gayramon** sings Schobert, Kasilag and OPM love songs today, March 22 on "Paco Park Presents," telecast at 11 p.m. on Channel 4. **Jonathan Coo** accompanies Gayramon on the piano.

'Dexter's Laboratory'

CARTOON Network is starting a new season of "Dexter's Laboratory" this April. The show has developed an enthusiastic following. Dexter is a brilliant child with an imagination that knows no limits. But he still has to contend with his pesky sister Dee Dee, who just loves ruining his latest experiments.

The retro king is back

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

AS THE father of retro music in the country, **Ramon "RJ" Jacinto** entertained baby boomers for 15 years in his legendary Bistro RJ, then known as the home of rock n' roll.

However, when RJ closed the last of his chain of bistros two years ago, he also gave up live performing. His loyal followers simply had to be content with seeing him perform in special concerts.

But recently, RJ pulled himself out of his hiatus to do a weekly gig every Friday night at the Edsa Shangri-La Lobby Lounge, starting April 5.

"Like good wine, Jaguar cars, Brioni suits, Piaget watches or my **Chet Atkins** Gretsch guitar, classics never die, they just get better," RJ maintains. "I'm really raring to go back to live performing. It's like my golf. I've got to have an outlet.

"Some people go sailing. Some play basketball. In the same way, I'm like **Michael Jordan** who is not happy when he doesn't play basketball. I really want to perform."

RJ believes that despite the onslaught of young bands in the local entertainment scene, there is still a strong demand for retro music.

"Retro has a very strong and wide market," RJ says. "Even young bands go strong on retro music because it is still very much in demand."

JACINTO. "Classics never die, they just get better."

He has formed a new, six-member band called RJ and Friends, composed of veteran musicians who performed with him before, including guitarist **Ben Tesoro** of the Hi-Jacks.

Also joining the group is former Parliament Syndicate singer **Carol Navea**. Other members are **Carlo Gaa** on keyboards, **Rolly Roldan** on bass and **Benjie Evia** on drums.

RJ promises to dish out the hits of the '60s and '70s, including the music of the Beatles and Beach Boys, mixed with the songs of **Enrique Iglesias** and **Carlos Santana,** plus Top 40 tunes.

"We've got an updated repertoire," RJ offers. "In a way, it's also a reflection of the programming of the station, showcasing four decades of music."

RJ owns RJ-FM 100.3 and *dzRJ* Radyo Bandido on the AM Band. He started the AM radio station in 1963, in his father's backyard when he was only 17.

According to the station's marketing and sales executive **Ricky Alegre** (formerly with Radio Mindanao Network), RJ-FM is now heard in eight major cities in the country—Manila, Cebu, Davao, Baguio, Bacolod, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and Tuguegarao.

"I'd like to believe we're the first radio station in the world to combine Top 40 and retro music," RJ boasts. "That's why we called it the greatest and the latest."

In his weekly concert series, RJ says he will also perform unplugged versions of **Eric Clapton**'s "Layla" and "Tears in Heaven," disco hits of the '70s like "Native New Yorker" and the Pointer Sisters' "I'm So Excited," and the music of **Elvis Presley**, Everly Brothers and **Little Richard**.

"I get utmost satisfaction seeing people happy and appreciate what I do when I perform," says RJ, who is also a businessman. "What I earn in performing is nothing compared to what I earn in business. But I value more what I earn from singing. It feels good to know that people shell out their money and pay for my talent."

Tomorrow, RJ will also perform in a free, open-air concert with **Jose "Pepe" Smith** at the Burnham Park in Baguio City. The show will also feature local Baguio bands and the foreign retro group, Snafu.

RJ, who had a political foray when he ran for senator in the 1995 elections, vows to concentrate on his music and ignore politics.

"At that time, **Cory (Aquino)** asked me to join FVR's Lakas party and I had to answer the call, so I tried politics," RJ shares "But I don't think I'm cut out for it. I don't like politics at all. It's full of treachery. I realized it's better to perform for people than be in politics.

"But it was an experience for me, especially during the campaign, because I learned a lot about people and our country."

Aside from reviving his singing career, RJ expresses his desire to resurrect "Woodstock," the renowned 1989 concert which featured over 40 bands and ran for more than 12 hours.

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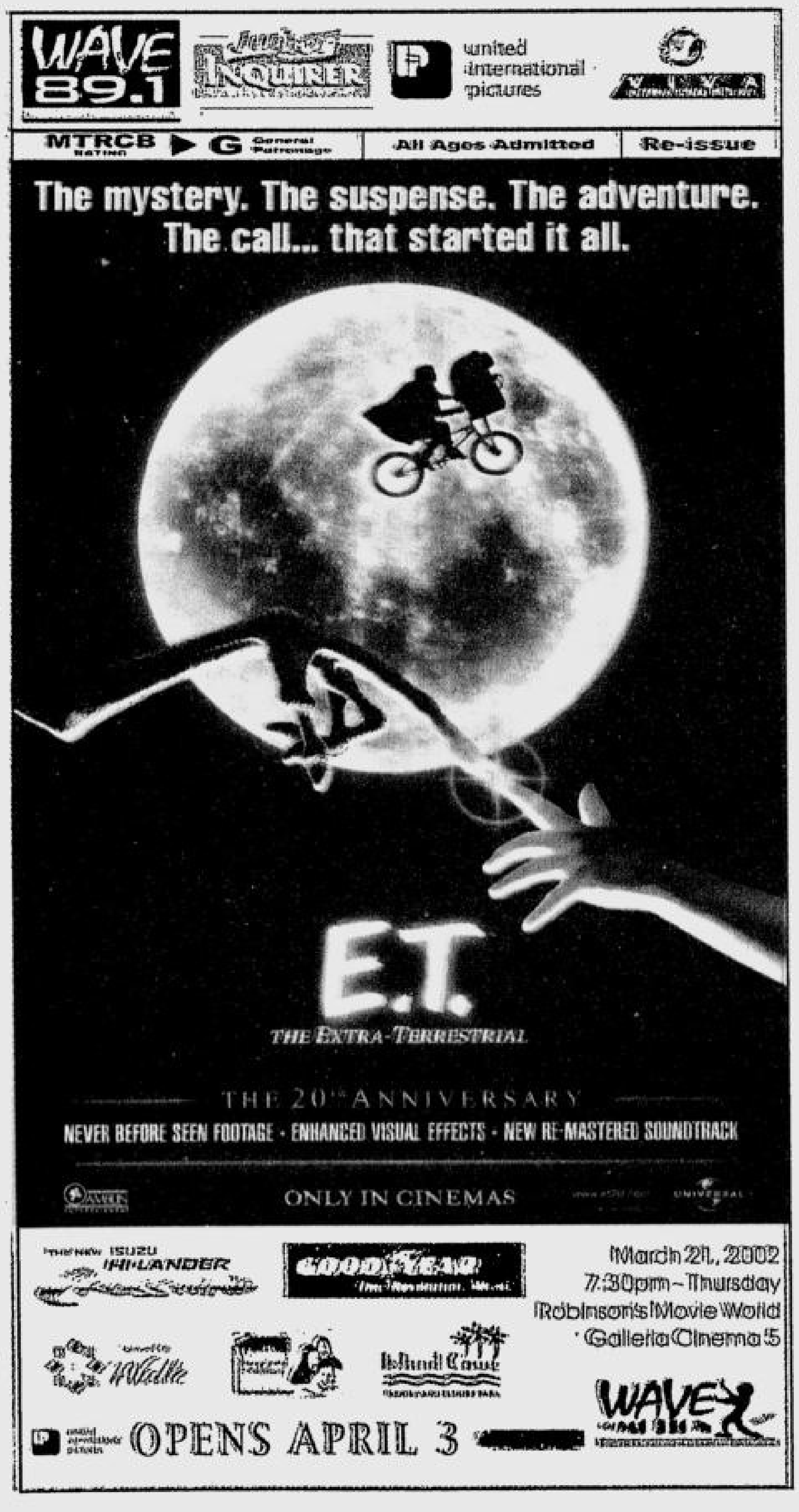
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The retro king . . .

From page A28

"'Woodstock' was a huge success," says RJ. "At that time, all the baby boomers and rock n' roll fans trooped to the Amoranto Stadium. You'd see families camping out in tents. It was really a musical event to remember and I don't think there has ever been something as big as that which happened recently."

RJ also wants to release another album. "It's been a long while since I came out with my own album," he says.

In the meantime, he is raring to return to the live performance scene with his forthcoming Friday night gig at Edsa Shangri-La.

"I performed at Bistro RJ for 14 years and those who used to watch me there will be happy to know there's a new place where they can see me perform again," RJ says.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	GOT 2 BELIEVE IN MAGIC
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMMED
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	BANDITS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	JIMMY NEUTRON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	JOHN Q
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	SNAKE CHARMER
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	AMADILO
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HUBOG / TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	JOHN Q
ODEON-2	BANDITS
ROBEN	SNAKE CHARMER
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	OTHER SIDE OF LOVE / AMERICAN PIE 2
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	BIBINGKA
REMAR	SNAKE CHARMER
REMAR-2	BIBINGKA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	BIBINGKA
B	EVA LASON KAY ADAN
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	THE MAJESTIC
CINEMA-2	BANDITS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
CINEMA-2	ACHILLES
CINEMA-3	BIBINGKA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	D-TOX
CINEMA-6	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
CINEMA-7	EVA
CINEMA-8	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BANDITS
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	JOHN Q
CINEMA-12	JIMMY NEUTRON
CINEMA-14	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
CINEMA-15	GOT 2 BELIEVE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	GOOD ADVICE
CINEMA-2	JIMMY NEUTRON
CINEMA-3	BANDITS
CINEMA-4	JOHN Q
CINEMA-5	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-6	THE MAJESTIC
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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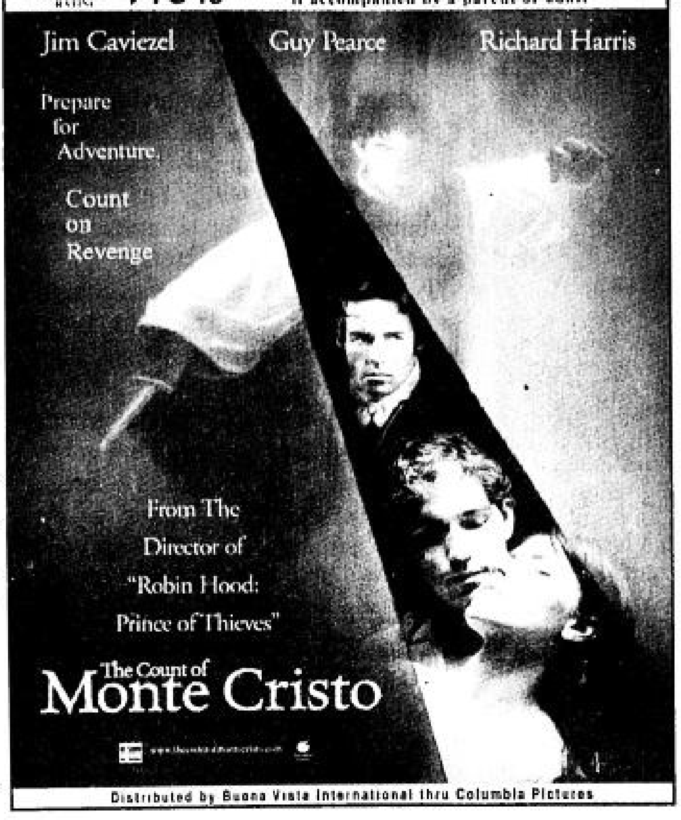
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1 BANDITS	1 JOHN Q	4 GOOD ADVICE	1 PERFUME (Phil. Premiere)	1 BANDITS
2 THE ROYAL TENEBAUMS	2 THE MAJESTIC	5 JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS	2 BANDITS	2 THE MAJESTIC
3 WE WERE SOLDIERS	3 BANDITS GUARANTEED SEATS	6 QUEEN OF THE DAMNED	3 JOHN Q	3 JOHN Q
4 QUEEN OF THE DAMNED		7 A BEAUTIFUL MIND	Onstage 4 LANI ON STAGE APRIL 12, 13, 19, 20,26 & 27 - 9 PM	4 JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS
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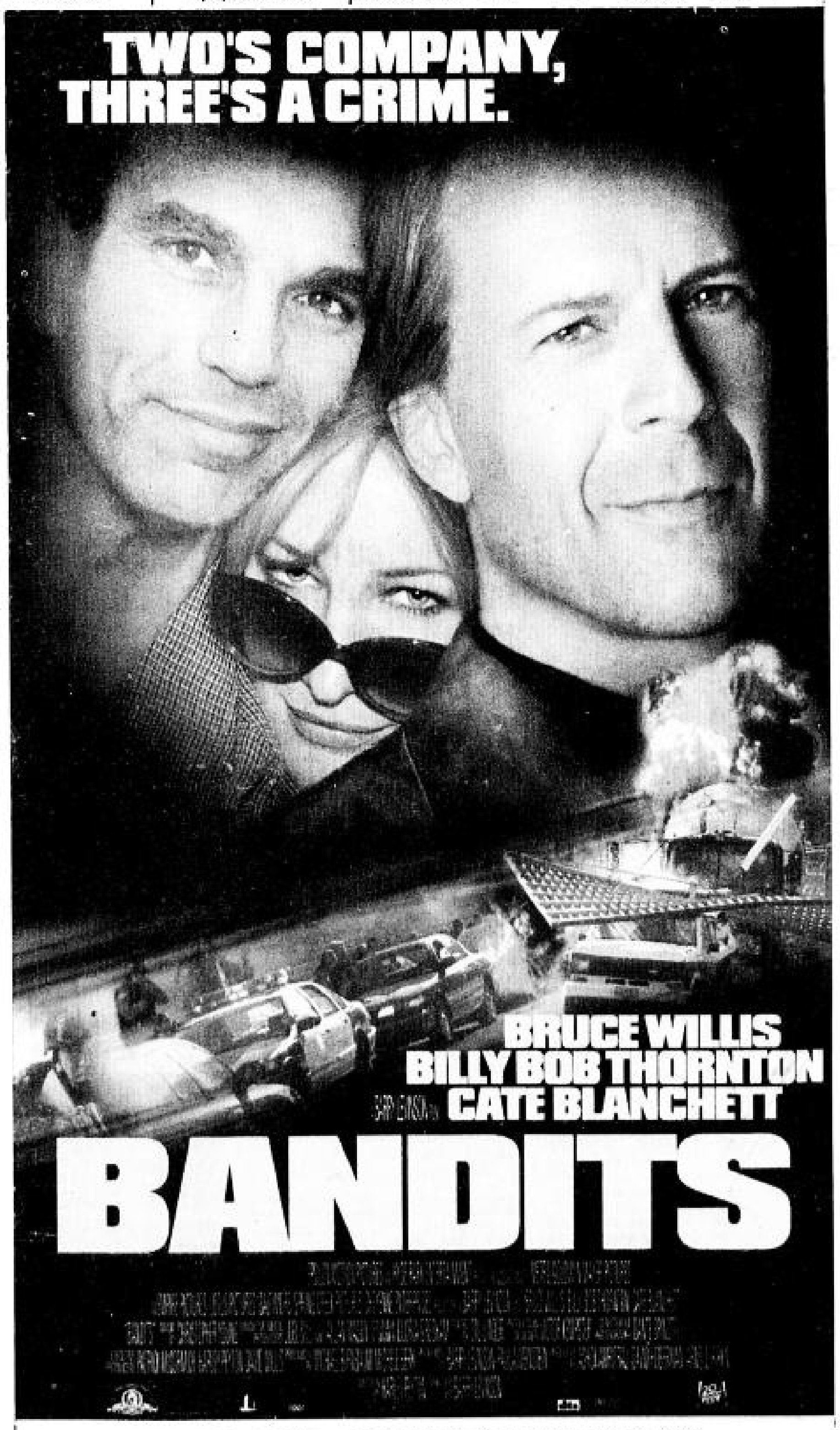
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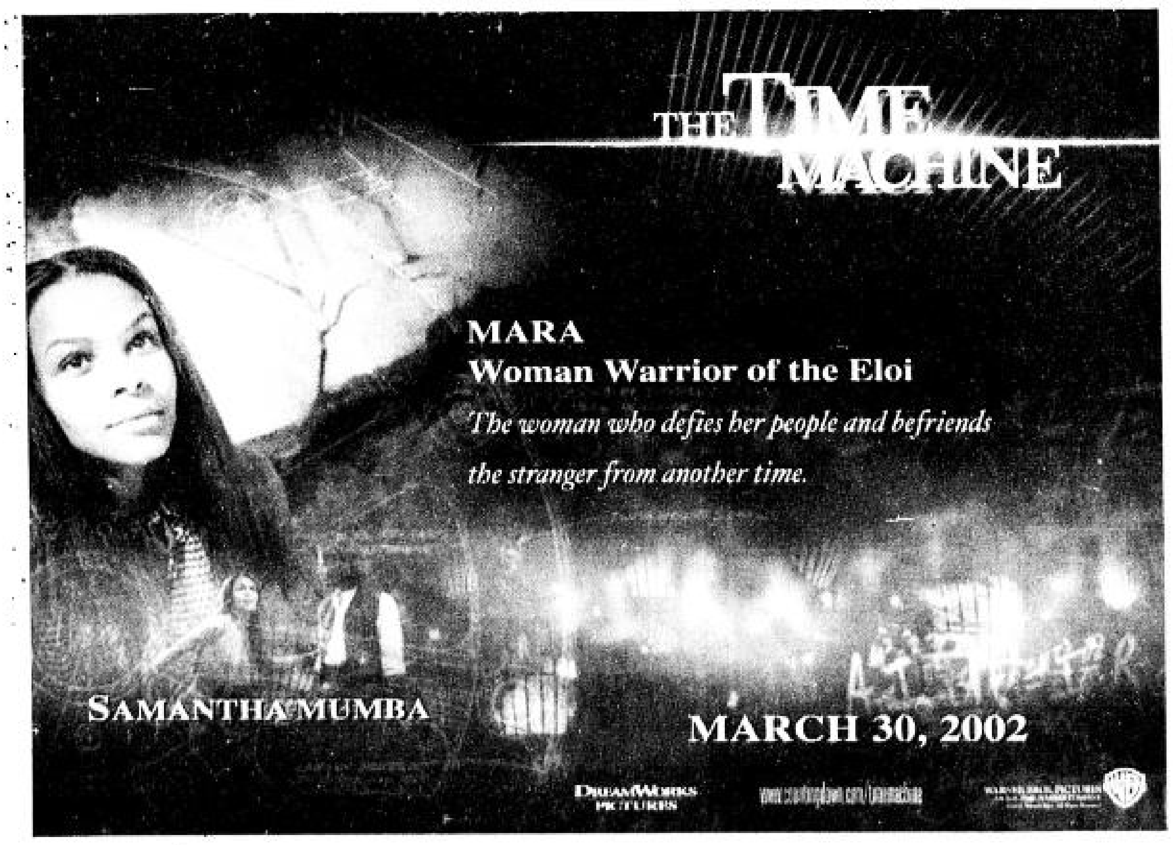
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The woman who defies her people and befriends the stranger from another time.
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DREAMWORKS PICTURES
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Editor Louie C. Camino

Sound tracks for life's passages

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I HAD the chance to speak on the phone with **Moy Ortiz** of The CompanY regarding the first cut of their "Storybook" album, titled "Min-san Isang Araw." He was amazed that I memorized the lyrics, and I totally got the positive sentiments.

If you recall, a couple of months back, I was extolling their other song, and now their second released single, "Baka Ikaw." Moy said I must really be prescient because I've picked what they've scheduled as their third single.

He composed the music and **Edith Gallardo** wrote the lyrics. I told Moy that almost all songs that speak of a love that's ended have a tinge of bitterness or extol a "martyr"-like mantra.

In each life there's a love that, because of wrong timing and circumstances, we never have the chance to see to its conclusion. In other words, "unfinished business."

I fully comprehend the motivation of the third cut from **Aiza Seguerra**'s "Pinakamamamamahal" album, "Pakisabi na Lang," a re-make of one of The CompanY's early hits. Moy and Edith also created this song.

Buy Aiza's latest album. Her voice is fuller, the range of emotions she can evoke at only 18 is mesmerizing. Her rendition of "Pakisabi na Lang" is my favorite.

Here's the song's refrain.

Pakisabi na lang na mahal ko siya
'Di na baleng may mahal siyang iba
Pakisabi 'wag siyang mag-alala
'Di ako umaasa.
Alam kong ito'y malabo
'Di ko na mababago
Gano'n pa man
Pakisabi na lang

The CompanY's "Minsan Isang Araw" takes a fresh approach to loving. It speaks of having once fallen in love, relishing the experience, and moving on with no regrets. It doesn't over-analyze what went wrong, and no blame is cast. It simply states that we fell in love, but love can and does evolve. We are still fortunate if and when we're given another chance.

I recently appreciated the song so much because I've made peace with **Phillip (Salvador)**. The song says that life does move on, and we must go on. Allow me to share with you my favorite lyrics from "Minsan Isang Araw."

Kay sarap balikan
Isang araw, minsan
Kay sarap balikan
Noong minsan, tayo's nagmahalan
Hinintay-hintay pa ng puso ko
Minahal-mahal pa sa isip ko
Ang mahal mo ngayon ay hindi na ako
Ang nakakatawa'y
Iba na rin ang mahal ko.
Hinintay-hintay pa ng puso ko
Minahal-mahal pa sa isip ko
Ang pag-ibig pala'y nagbabago
May mahal kang iba
Iba na rin ang mahal ko
Noong minsan isang araw
Nagbago isang araw.

For those who are truly blessed, love is a lifetime commitment that grows stronger through the years. For those of us who couldn't sustain the bond, the best we can hope for is to eventually reach the point of being friends, especially because our kids will benefit from their parents having a healthy respect for each other.

Before you jump to conclusions, I'm not yet involved, although I believe Ipe already is. Since by now it's patently obvious that I create sound tracks for my life's passages, here's where I am now.

* * *

OPM is thriving and **Gary Valenciano** just released his all-duets album "One 2 One." The carrier single, Gary's duet with **Kyla** (who in my opinion has the same star quality and natural, effortless inflections as **Beyoncé Knowles** of Destiny's Child), "Can We Just Stop and Talk a While," sums up where I see myself at present in the romance department.

Here are my favorite lyrics:

Early yet to say what lies ahead
It's the first day of the rest of our lives
Can we just stop and talk a while
Get to know each other, who are we to know
Love could be waiting at the end, 'round that bend.
And so let's stop and talk a while.

Gary's all-duets CD is beautifully conceptualized because he has allowed all his partners to shine, and their distinctive styles are highlighted. It's just been released in the market. Apart from the music, commendable is the care given to the photos taken by **Jun de Leon** and their lay-out in the album's lyrics booklet.

That's probably the only good thing that's come as a result of rampant piracy. Producers have, out of necessity, gotten more artistic, whimsical, and innovative in their packaging of CDs in particular. Meticulous detail has been given to the perks and bonuses of buying the original. Gary's "One 2 One" is one of the most eye-pleasingly presented CDs. The music's merits match the superb visual treatment.

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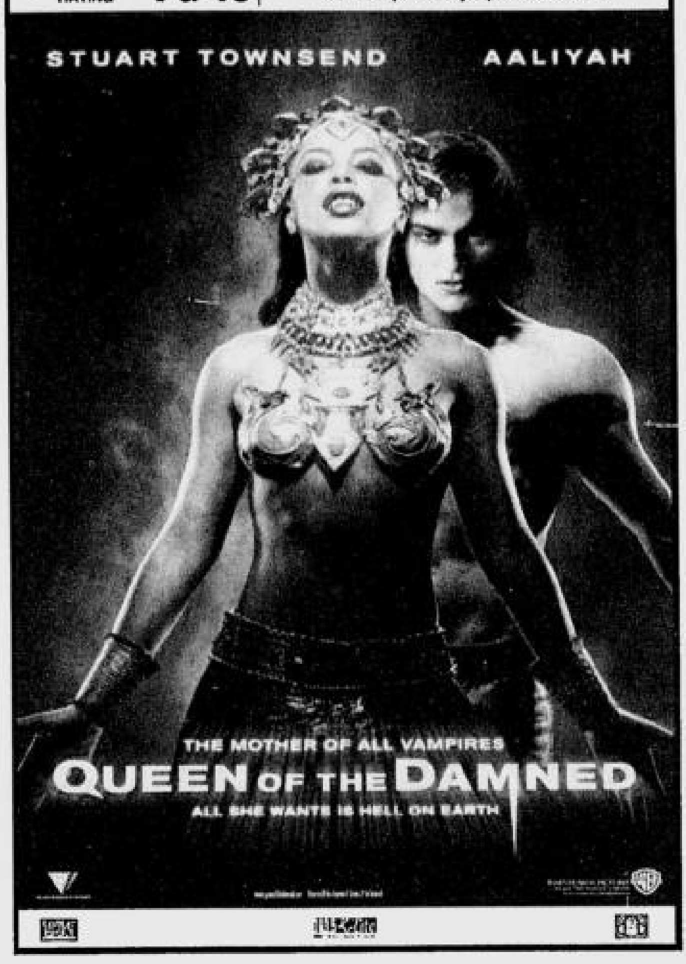
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-- Janice Crawford,"V"Magazine

PERFUME is an improvisational piece set in the world of fashion which centers upon: Lorenzo Mancici, head of the Mancici fashion empire, who learns on his way to his own surprise birthday party that he has prostate cancer; mega-rap star McBrilliant, who along with Lorenzo's son Mario, is launching a new line of street fashion; Roberta, whose partner Camille has just left their company after seven years; Janice, editor of a ruthless fashion magazine; Anthony, a hipster photographer and Arianne a typical supermodel diva.

CAST: Carmen Electra, Omar Epps, Peter Gallagher, Jeff Goldblum, Mariel Hemingway, Estella Warren & Michelle Williams
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
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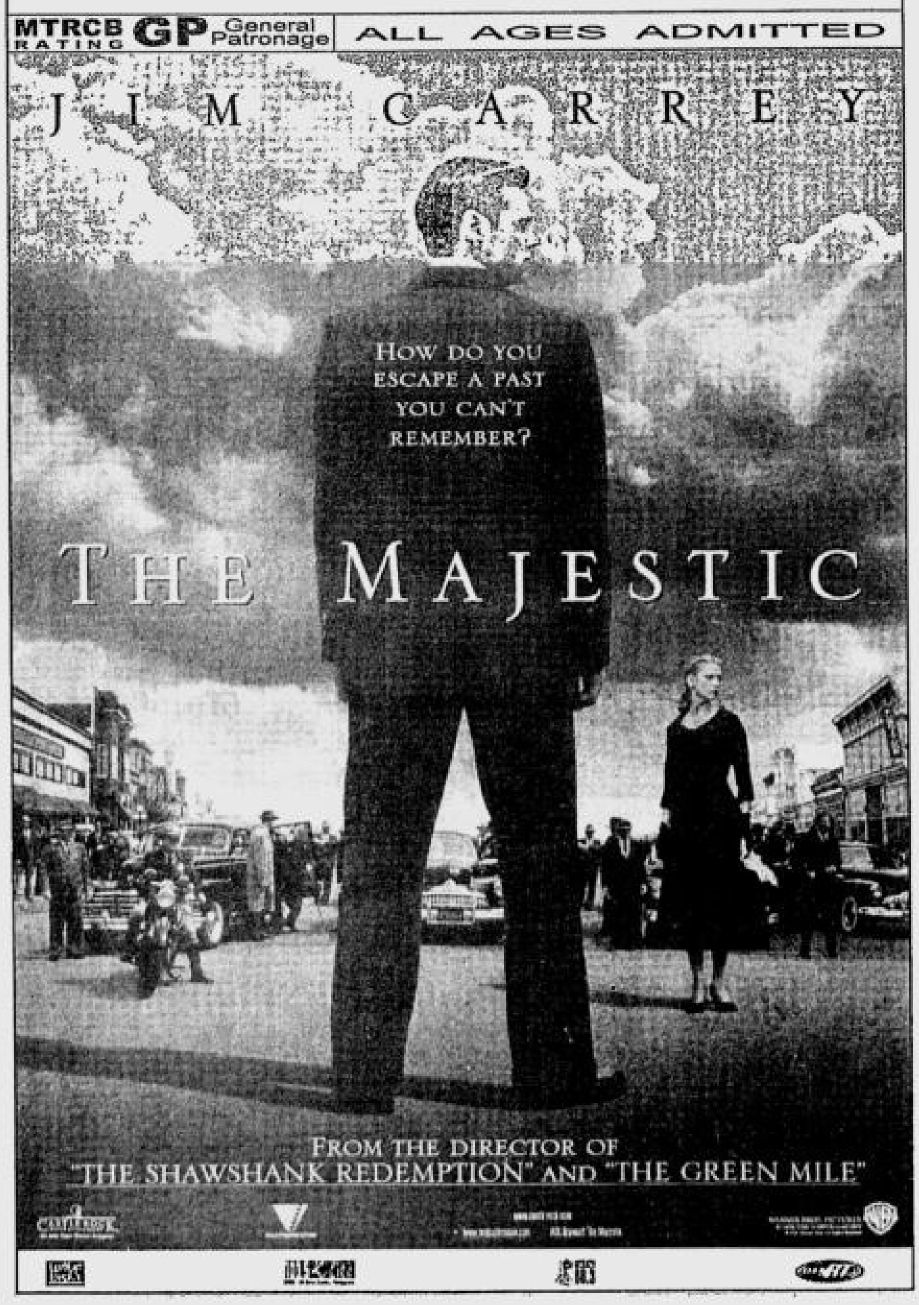
JIM CARREY
HOW DO YOU ESCAPE A PAST YOU CAN'T REMEMBER?
THE MAJESTIC
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION" AND "THE GREEN MILE"

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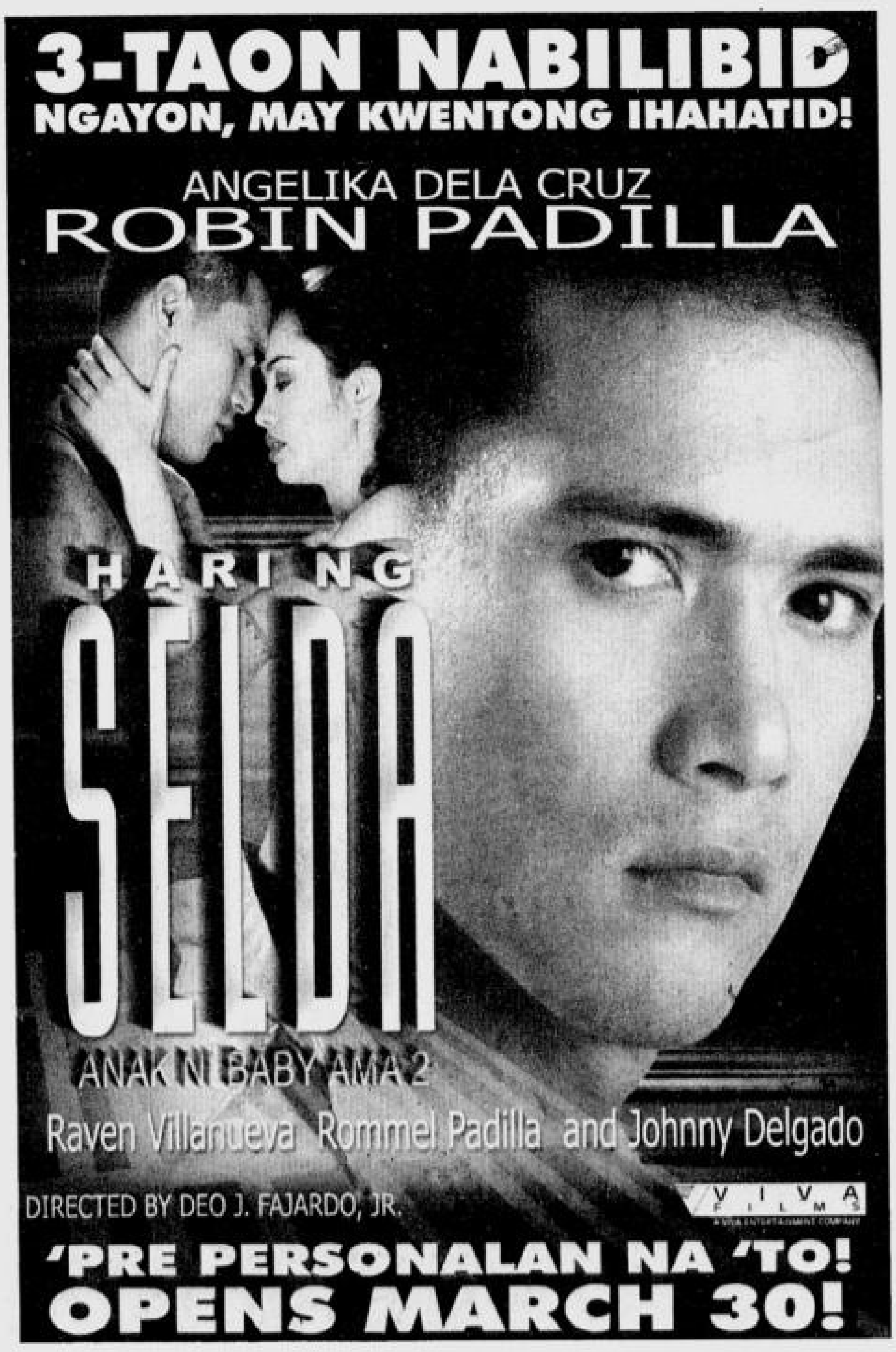

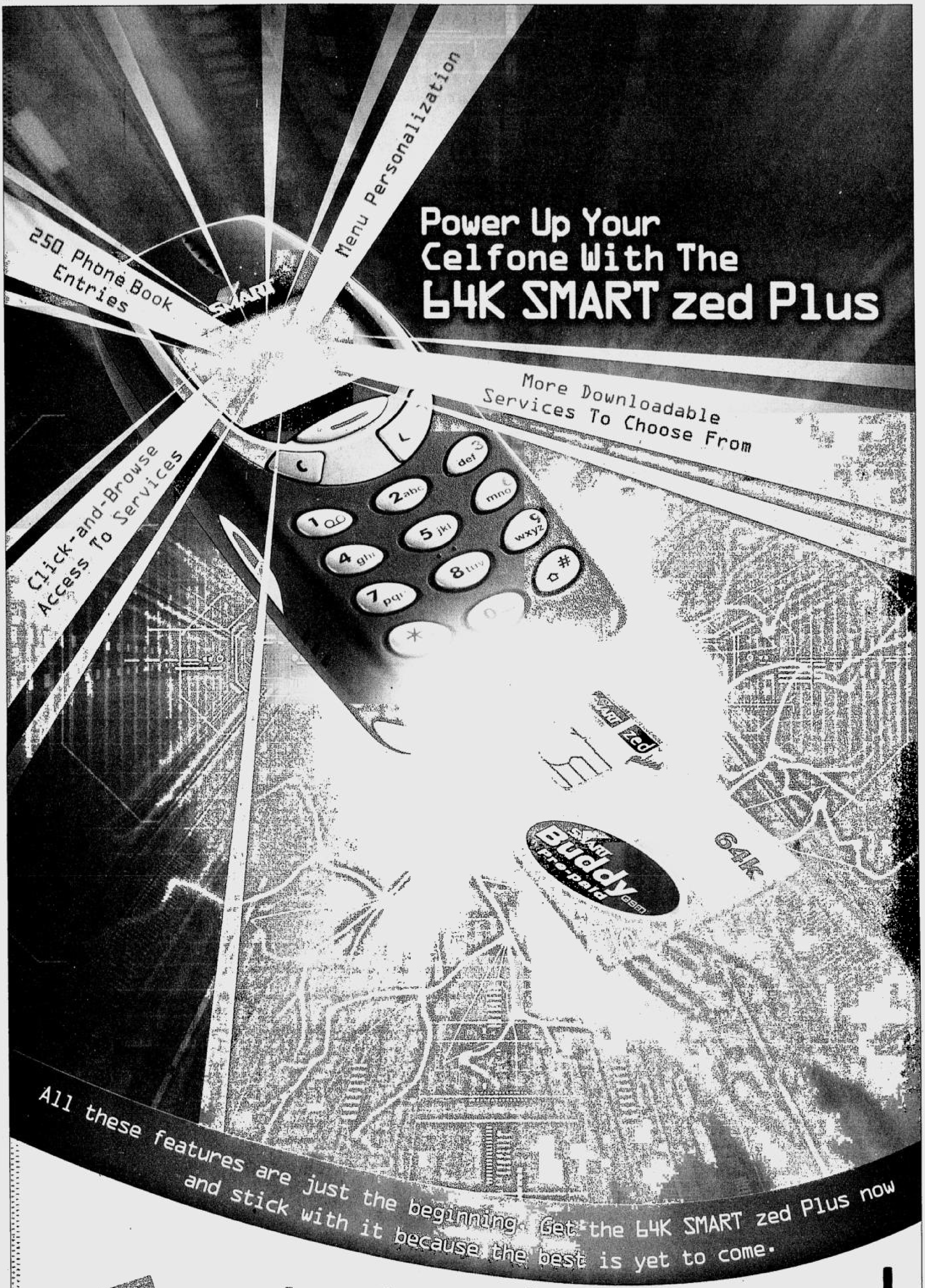
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BUSINESS

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Private firms eye anti-corruption fund

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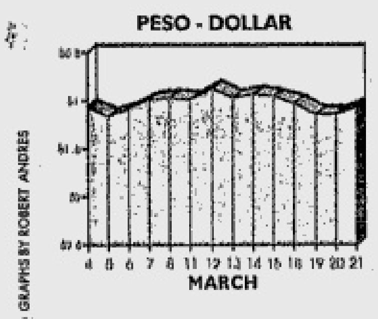


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.065 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 21, 2002

¥132.20 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 20, 2002

GOLD: $292.30/292.80

per ounce Hong Kong, March 21, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end up

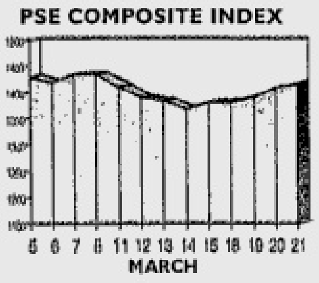
SHARES ended higher for a fifth successive session yesterday, as investors selectively picked stocks seen benefitting from an economic rebound, traders said.

Despite dwindling volumes ahead of next week's Easter holiday, investors continued to accumulate stocks perceived to be likely winners from the low interest rates environment and an impending recovery in the United States.

"It (the market gains) are due to the low interest rates, and the building consensus that the United States will recover in the second half," Mutual Fund Management Co. of the Philippines president Efren Cruz said.

The United States is the Philippines' largest trading partner.

Cruz added that on the domestic front there were some nascent signs of economic revival, citing strong interest in at least one major Manila property project.



(See stock market report on Page B2)

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MAKATI Business Club is seriously considering establishing an anti-corruption fund to be bankrolled by the country's top corporations aimed at spurring the private sector to take the initiative in stamping out this illicit practice.

This was disclosed by MBC executive director Guillermo Luz following yesterday's presentation of a Social Weather Station survey, which showed that businessmen were willing to chip in one percent of their profits to fund an anti-corruption program.

Luz said the anti-corruption fund would be used to finance advocacy programs in the private sector to encourage businessmen not to deal with government regulators who demand bribes in exchange for government contracts.

"The best way to break this vicious cycle is for the business side to stop bribing government officials. If we cut off the supply side, we believe that corruption would be lessened, if not wiped out," Luz said.

Based on the SWS survey, businessmen were willing to contribute one percent of their income if this would cut down the level of corruption at par with Singapore over the next 10 years.

Luz said businessmen reckoned that their contribution to the anti-corruption fund was a small cost to pay in view of the benefits derived from the eradication of corruption in government—government projects would cost 15 to 20 percent less; business income would improve by 5 percent, and consumers would benefit from lower costs of goods and services.

Luz said Hong Kong has an anti-corruption body but this was funded by the government. He likened the funding scheme to the Philippine Business for Social Progress where corporate members shell out part of their profits to finance charity projects and livelihood programs for the poor.

The SWS survey of enterprises on public sector corruption was conducted from Sept. 24 to Dec. 4 last year and the second survey of its kind since 2000.

The survey showed that corruption remained pervasive in both the private and public sectors. The respondents—200 from the top 1,500 corporations in the country and 400 small- and medium-enterprises—gave the biggest improvement in rating to the Office of the President while the Philippine National Police had the biggest decline in rating.

SWS said the Office of the President had a "dramatic" 87 percentage-point swing to plus 53 percent in businessmen's perceptions on its sincerity in fighting corruption.

Former President Estrada, on trial for allegedly plundering a personal fortune of P4 billion through bribes and kickbacks, had rated a minus 34 percent in a similar SWS poll conducted during his last year in office.

The business community believed that government contracts have a median "bribery component" equivalent to 15 percent of the actual cost, slightly less than the average of 20 percent in 2000.

Two out of three Filipino companies admitted "most, if not all" companies in their sector engaged in bribery to win government contracts.

Previous independent estimates suggest a fifth of the Philippine government's national budget is lost through corruption, equivalent to about P150 billion.

IMF urges gov't to raise VAT rate to 12%

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund has urged the government to raise the value-added tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent to increase revenue collection by about P20 billion.

A ranking finance official said the IMF had recommended the increase in the VAT rate to a range of 11 to 12 percent as one of the measures to address the government's poor tax collection.

The IMF noted that the country's tax collection was a mere 12.7 percent of gross domestic product in year 2001. This was 3.25 percentage points lower than the level before the 1997 Asian crisis.

The Fund wanted the government to increase its VAT over the medium term to "rebuild revenue that had markedly declined relative to the GDP over the past years."

Every percentage point increase in the VAT normally increases revenue collection by P10 billion.

But a finance official stressed that the VAT was one of the more "poorly collected" taxes and that increasing the value-added tax rate would not necessarily shore up revenue collection.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said that increasing the VAT would not be a priority alongside the earlier suggestion of the IMF to increase the excise taxes on fuel products.

IMF/ B4

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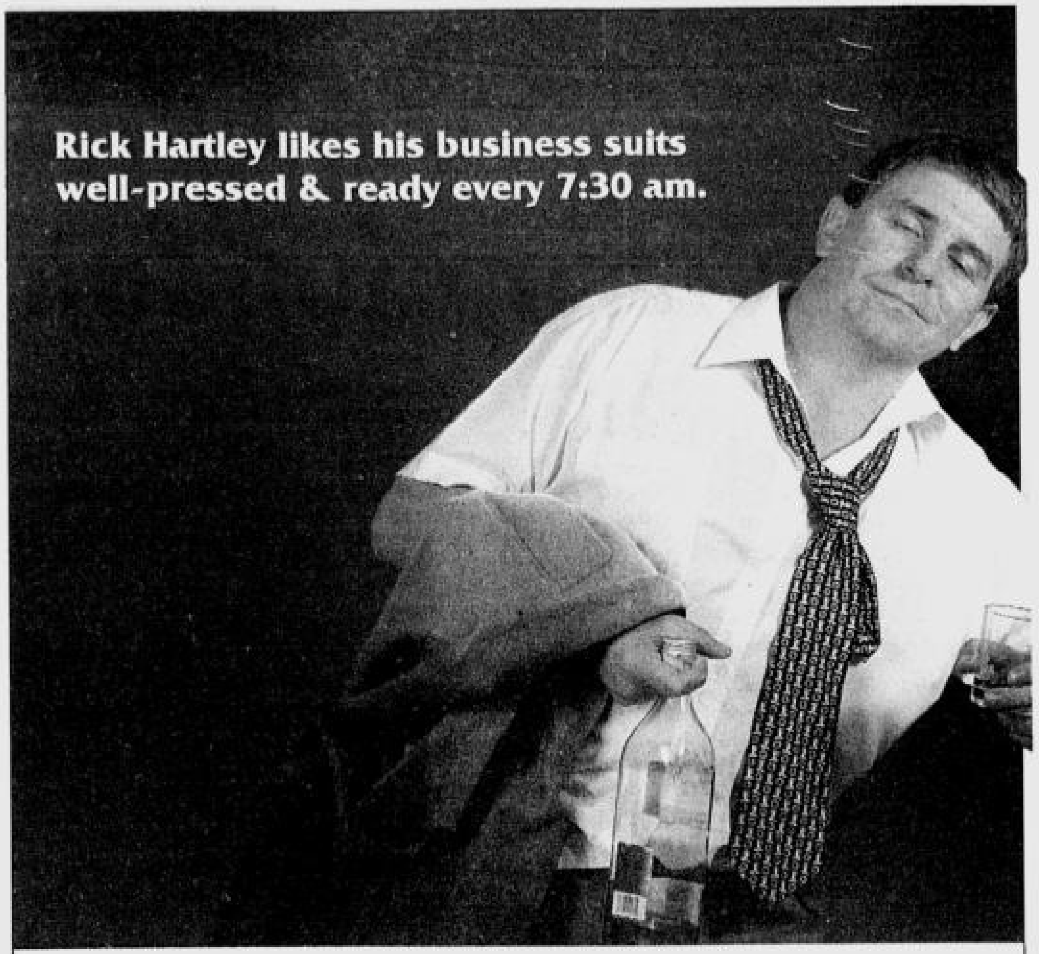

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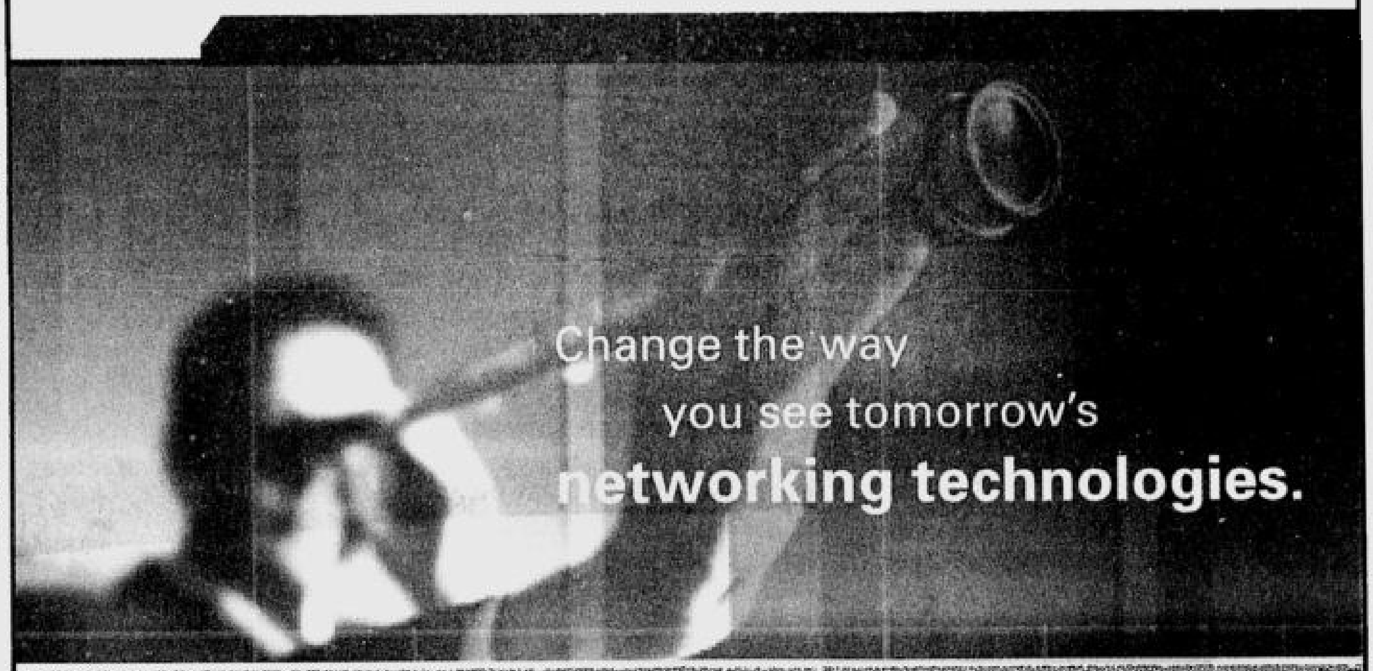

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DISCLOSURES

SM Prime Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 26, 2:30 p.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom, Peninsula Manila Hotel, Makati City. Stockholders as of March 27 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

EURO-Med Laboratories Philippines Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 15, 10 a.m. at the Philippine Columbian Association, Paco, Manila. Stockholders as of April 19 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

IONICS Inc. declared a P0.15-per-share cash dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of June 14. Payment shall be on July 15, 2002.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Bank of the Philippine Islands** approved the declaration of a 20-percent stock dividend to common stockholders of record as of the 15th day of receipt by BPI of the approval of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

* * *

MABUHAY Vinyl Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 25, 3 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club. Stockholders as of April 1 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Thursday, March 21, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	3,000
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	90	100	90	100	1,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67	69	66.5	67.5	405,100
China Banking Corp.	600	600	600	600	1,060
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	3,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35.5	36.5	35.5	36.5	1,450,800
First E-Bank Corp.	2.34	2.36	2.34	2.36	191,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	44.5	45	44	44.5	215,900
Philippine National Bank	65	66.5	65	66.5	11,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.75	13	12.75	13	12,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.5	20,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.32	2,353,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	210,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1100	1100	1090	1090	3,500
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34.5	35.5	34.5	35.5	80,200
Diversified Fin. Network	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	6,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc	.7000	0.71	0.7	0.7	4,730,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	790	790	785	785	2,480
Ipeople Inc.	0.87	0.91	0.87	0.9	960,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	38,100,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3	3	3	40,000
Piltel	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.43	10,200,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	130,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	520	525	520	520	54,710
Ivantage Corp.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.52	580,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	16,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	30.5	31	30	30	186,900
Manila Electric Co. B	44	45.5	44	45	807,900
Petron Corp.	1.86	1.9	1.82	1.82	10,466,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.46	2.48	2.46	2.46	885,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.22	932,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	79,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	90,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	100,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	17,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	205,900
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	8,800
RFM Corp.	1.56	1.6	1.54	1.56	1,642,000
Swift Food Inc.	2	2	1.98	1.98	32,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47.5	48	47.5	47.5	64,000
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	65.5	64.5	65	134,300
Universal Robina Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	1,828,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.33	850,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	10	10	10	10	5,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.5	0.75	0.5	0.75	200,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	20,000
Ayala Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	1,420,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.96	2	1.92	2	2,913,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.57	0.6	0.57	0.6	150,000
APC Group Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	20,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3	3	161,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.5	60,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	100,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.78	0.8	0.77	0.77	9,220,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	280,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	2,640,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	2,980,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	31	32	31	31.5	266,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	200,000
Ionics Inc.	8	8.1	8	8.1	28,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	109,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	40,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.87	0.92	0.87	0.89	24,440,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	500,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	140,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	5,490,000
Music Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	1,450,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	40,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	2,020,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	110,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	30,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	430,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	70,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	20,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	62,700
Steniel Manufacturing	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	260,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.49	2,620,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	160,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.42	390,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	35	36	35	36	133,400
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	780	780	780	780	100
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.72	1.74	1.72	1.72	160,000
Jollibee Warrants	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	59,500
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	242,000,000
RFM Corp.-Pref.	4.4	4.45	4.4	4.45	67,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	5,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.8	18,344,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	2,420,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	2,740,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.32	2.34	2,580,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.38	260,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	997,000
MINING					
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	14,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	970,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.0048	0.0044	0.0048	78,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	220,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	400,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	68,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	42,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	3,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	700,000

CURRENCIES

March 21, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.129178	1.000000	51.2080
Japan	Yen	0.008595	0.007612	0.3898
United Kingdom	Pound	1.613708	1.429100	73.1814
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144780	0.128217	6.5657
Switzerland	Franc	0.683067	0.604924	30.9769
Canada	Dollar	0.714761	0.632992	32.4143
Singapore	Dollar	0.618050	0.547345	28.0284
Australia	Dollar	0.599352	0.530786	27.1805
Bahrain	Dinar	2.995326	2.652661	135.8375
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301114	0.266667	13.6555
Brunei	Dollar	0.616028	0.545554	27.9367
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000114	0.000101	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.026072	0.023089	1.1823
UAE	Dirham	0.307444	0.272272	13.9425
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.000760	0.0389
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.885600	45.3498
Brazil	Real	0.483174	0.427899	21.9119
Denmark	Kroner	0.134394	0.119019	6.0947
India	Rupee	0.023206	0.020551	1.0524
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.297152	0.263158	13.4758
Mexico	New Peso	0.124551	0.110302	5.6483
New Zealand	Dollar	0.498203	0.441209	22.5934
Norway	Kroner	0.129459	0.114649	5.8709
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018850	0.016694	0.8549
South Africa	Rand	0.097103	0.085994	4.4036
Sweden	Kroner	0.110897	0.09821	5.0291
Syria	Pound	0.021925	0.019417	0.9943
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032308	0.028612	1.4652
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001297	0.001149	0.0588

The 4As of corruption

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

FOUR justices of the Court of Appeals are now the subject of a very hush-hush investigation, ordered no less by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., about alleged corrupt practices in the second highest court of the land.

The four justices have been dubbed the "4As" by lawyers frequently appearing before the appellate court.

We would love to tell you why the four have been called as such, but doing so would have prematurely betrayed their identities.

The appellate court has, as of January, 44 justices in all, 13 of which, including Presiding Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, are female. In any case, the 4As are all males.

For additional clues, here they are.

One of the four justices has a relative, a bewigged lawyer who has masterfully turned the golf course and the club verandah as his law office, who was also implicated in the corruption scandal in the Baguio Regional Trial Court. That scandal, denounced by Baguio RTC Judge Ruben Ayson, resulted in the relief of Antonio Reyes as Baguio RTC executive judge.

Another appellate justice, according to the grapevine, has actually been suspended and his salary withheld pending the results of the investigation. This justice is renown for giving Christmas gifts to the rank-and-file employees without fail.

Another justice has been seen using the Pavilion Court of the Holiday Inn casino-hotel to personally meet with the litigants.

And the fourth justice was complained to have received P200,000 just to have himself inhibited in a hotly contested case.

Can't af-Ford

THE GOOD news in the sad news about the closure of the Manila office of the Ford Foundation is that the New York headquarters has decided to continue its generous graduate school scholarships for young men and women with leadership potentials.

The foundation has committed to send 20 to 40 bright but poor students a year to any school in the world for their masteral/graduate studies. But funding for all other Philippine programs shall be terminated by end-2003, according to the grapevine.

Established in 1952, the Manila office of the Ford Foundation will close down by the end of next year because of budget constraints (the foundation's stock market investments suffered heavy losses in the wake of the Sept. 11 bombings and the Enron meltdown) and new geo-political considerations.

In contrast, the foundation is keeping open its new Vietnam and China offices.

With the closure of the Manila office, Philippine concerns will now be attended by the Jakarta office of the foundation.

Despite having still a year and nine months to wind down its activities, the foundation's Ayala 6750 office has proven difficult in the last few days to reach by telephone, with only a recorded voice message and a fax machine taking down calls.

Heard through the grapevine

WITH about P6 billion in cash left from its overseas divestment, ICTSI is again on the prowl for overseas acquisitions. ICTSI chair Enrique Razon Jr., who had just returned from Indonesia and China, is flying to Japan this Holy Week precisely for that purpose.

In addition, ICTSI has turned in a bid for a port in Poland and is currently negotiating with the Korean owners of another port in Taiwan.

* * *

NOTICE to readers: In keeping with the Lenten tradition, *Cocktales* will not appear on Holy Monday and Holy Wednesday. The INQUIRER, on the other hand, has no issue on Good Friday. The column will therefore resurrect, hopefully in the same mischievous spirit, the following Monday, April Fools' Day.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Megaworld, Boni West sign deal

PROPERTY giant Megaworld Corp. and Bonifacio West Development Corp., a consortium led by the Rufino-Dupasquier group, have signed a memorandum of agreement on a joint-venture project that will transform a 5-hectare prime property in the Fort Bonifacio Global City into a mixed-use complex at an estimated cost of P15 billion.

The property is situated in a highly strategic location overlooking the Manila Golf and Country Club, a stone's throw from the Manila Polo Club and the Forbes Park subdivision. Bonifacio West acquired the property from Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. in a P2.5-billion deal.

In a disclosure to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Megaworld said that under the agreement, it would build "a series of multi-story residential condominium buildings, most of which have excellent views of the Manila Golf and Country Club," within the property. Megaworld will also develop "a village town center consisting of restaurants and boutique shops to cater to residents of the community, including those from Forbes Park and Dasmariñas Village."

An important feature of the entire development will be an almost 1-kilometer-long frontage directly facing the golf course. It is targeted for completion over a period of eight to 12 years.

The first residential phase to be launched—Forbeswood Heights—will be made up of six towers of luxury garden villas linked together by a lagoon-style pool, an outdoor tennis court and landscaped gardens in a lavish tropical resort setting, according to Megaworld vice president Rosemarie Cambaliza.

8
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Nissan Exalta LS 1.6 M/T	770,000	15,533	14,472	51,882	66,500	16,473
Nissan Exalta DS 1.5 M/T	688,000	13,897	12,930	46,396	54,200	14,719
Nissan Cefiro Elite 2.0 A/T	1,310,000	26,460	24,621	88,276	171,500	28,026

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Life Together

Business group proposing Customs valuation reforms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A PRIVATE sector-led oversight committee on smuggling will submit to the Department of Finance next month its proposed set of reforms in the rules governing custom's valuation and supervision of the country's ports.

Makati Business Club executive director and committee member Guillermo Luz said the oversight committee members had already agreed on the parameters of the proposed reforms.

Luz said any policy change in the Bureau of Custom's rules should take into consideration its impact on business operations. "The reforms should be business friendly and they should not cause undue delays in the release of shipments."

Luz said the reforms should also ensure that the government would get its fair share of taxes and duties to keep the budget deficit within target. The BOC is aiming to generate P115.1 billion in collections this year mainly from a clampdown on smuggling and tighter valuation of imports.

The committee will also move to resolve policy conflicts in the BOC regulations that create loopholes for unscrupulous businessmen to bring in "hot commodities."

Luz cited the case of used vehicles and used clothes in the country wherein government regulators could not make a categorical statement on whether these shipments were legal or not.

Aside from the MBC, the members of the oversight committee are the Federation of Philippine Industries, Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, and Management Association of the Philippines.

The oversight committee was formed by Malacañang in line with the President's commitment during the Economic Summit in December to allow the private sector to take a direct hand in monitoring and curbing smuggling.

The oversight committee has already conducted an ocular inspection of the BOC facilities at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. It is scheduled to make a similar visit in Cebu this week.

MERALCO'S $138-M LOAN

ADB may waive profitability requirement

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank yesterday said it was willing to waive the profitability requirement on the $138-million loan to the Lopez-controlled Manila Electric Co. In a press briefing yesterday, ADB chief country officer to the Philippines Richard Ondrik said the bank would not oppose Meralco's request for a waiver on its covenant to maintain a return on rate base (RORB) of at least 8 percent.

In 2001, Meralco's RORB stood at only 4 percent, lower than the 5.1 percent in 2000.

RORB is a profitability benchmark imposed by creditors to company-borrowers based on levels the creditors believe the borrowers can sustain healthy operations.

Meralco earlier said it would seek a waiver on the profitability requirement from the ADB and the World Bank for a combined debt of $200 million. Without the waiver, the company can be held in technical default by the creditors.

In the case of the ADB, the $138-million loan was approved in 1994 to help improve Meralco's electricity distribution in Luzon.

Ondrik said the ADB received Meralco's request two weeks ago and that the board was likely to give its approval within the next few weeks.

"We don't want to remove the prerogative of the board to decide on it but the bank has never said no to such RORB-related requests," he said.

The ADB executive also said the bank would not want to take the heat by pressuring Meralco to increase its RORB through a rate increase. Meralco's petition for a rate hike is still pending with the Energy Regulatory Commission.

Without a waiver, Meralco will find it difficult to seek fresh loans from other creditors.

Assuming a favorable response from both the ADB and the World Bank, this would be the third year that Meralco would get a waiver on the RORB requirement. It first secured a waiver in 1999 when its RORB level started to deteriorate.

Meralco hopes to improve its profitability level with a planned 30-centavo per kilowatt rate increase.

LTO to resume registration of used auto imports

THE LAND Transportation Office (LTO) has agreed to resume the registration of imported used vehicles after the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) promised to tighten its monitoring of the conversion of the right-hand vehicles.

LTO chief Roberto Lastimoso said his agency would support the continued importation of used motor vehicles as long as it complies with safety and environmental standards of the government.

The LTO and SBMA are scheduled to sign a memorandum of agreement Monday for a closer cooperation between the two government agencies for the strict monitoring of used vehicle imports.

The MOA was reached following a meeting early this week between Lastimoso, Motor Vehicles Importers Association of Subic Bay Freeport Inc. president Eddie Barretto, and SBMA and BOC officials.

The LTO suspended last month the registration of used vehicle imports in Subic after the Department of Trade and Industry began its probe on the legality of this booming trade. The suspension put in limbo the operations of importers and auctioneers in Subic.

GSIS: The weakest link?

LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Josephus B. Jimenez

THE GSIS is one of today's weakest links. It has to reform or go bust. It has not been faithful to its mission. Its trustees are not even accountable to the poor civil servants who are compelled to carry the burden of funding it.

While the members are suffering, GSIS executives continue to amass high, unregulated salaries and retirement packages. The GSIS president receives P6 million a year while GSIS members don't even get the quality of services they deserve. My parents always receive their pensions that are too small and too late.

Diverting GSIS funds?

The GSIS was created to insure civil servants from the hazards of death, injury and sickness. The GSIS premiums are not exactly cheap. They are deducted from the government workers' salaries by compulsion of law. This money is held in trust by the GSIS trustees to answer for the benefits due to widows, orphans, retirees and pensioners as well as to sick, injured and dying employees. Instead of safeguarding it, the fund has been invested in extraneous stock ventures, many of which ended in tremendous losses.

The GSIS and the SSS reportedly pumped in P15 billion into the PCI Equitable Bank buyout. According to the COA, the GSIS lost in that investment. Of course, the GSIS drumbeaters will say it is covered by the agency's charter. We say, however, that stock investment is not its main mission. They'd say these are paper losses. We challenge them to recover these losses in their lifetime. They're playing games with the peoples' money.

GSIS holdings irrelevant?

GSIS has invested in oil, mining, real estate and other highly speculative ventures. Its choice of investment areas borders on gambling.

Now, if you were one of the half a million public school teachers who constitute almost half of the GSIS membership, what could be the relevance of an oil investment to you? As beneficial owners of the fund that constitutes the total assets of GSIS, were you ever consulted before such highly speculative investments were made? The answer is no, of course. You are only ordered to contribute. You don't have a say in decision-making. The board is not accountable to you since you don't elect them.

GSIS too expensive?

COA reports show that in 2000, the GSIS spent P20.5 billion. It paid only P18.2 billion in benefits to members. It spent P1.11 billion in salaries and benefits in one year alone. Between 1999 and 2000, the COA reported a 26-percent increase in payroll cost. Thus, while its members are suffering, the GSIS officials and personnel live the lifestyle of the rich and the famous.

In 2001, the COA wrote the following memo: "While the fund of the GSIS comes from the contributions of lowly employees like teachers, utility workers and clerks, they, who were entrusted with these contributions, had arrogated upon themselves fantastic salaries taken from the contributions of these lowly employees."

Depriving the poor?

The GSIS thus is a Robin Hood in reverse. Instead of milking the rich to give to the poor, the system gets money from the poor to make GSIS executives richer and richer.

The Inquirer, on Sept. 29, 2001, bannered a story entitled "GSIS bosses getting P724,000 each." This is adding insult to injury. The GSIS is exempt from the salary standardization law. Thus, the trustees can pass a resolution increasing the executives' pays and perks.

Enriching the rich?

The Inquirer cited COA reports showing that the trustees got a Christmas bonus of P723,968 each. Is this conscionable considering that the nation is in crisis and the people are suffering in extreme poverty?

The President of the Philippines earns only P50,000 a month. The GSIS president gets P564,869.55 in salary, or more than 10 times that of the President of this country. Is the GSIS an independent republic? The GSIS EVP gets P453,548.90 a month; the SVP, P300,672.45, and each VP gets P252,187.40. A security guard gets P30,104.20 monthly and a laborer P27,021.50. These were taken from the poor workers in the government, many of whom get a take home pay of less than P5,000 every payday.

Retiring millionaires?

Because the GSIS has no accountability to its members, it came up with what was euphemistically packaged as an Employees Loyalty Incentive Plan to justify the out-of-this-world pensions for its lucky executives.

A former GSIS president appointed by Erap got P16.7 million upon retirement. He worked for less than three years. The SVP got P7.89 million in ELIP, plus P5.6 million in lump sum, P2.15 million in provident fund, terminal leave of P1.8 million and a monthly of P93,607 plus a cash award of P50,000 or a total package of P17.5 million.

One SVP got a total of P16.683 million while another received P15.61 million. A VP got P13.16 million, another got P13.5 million and another got P10.3 million. The corporate secretary had P16.6 million. Meanwhile, my parents' pension check of less than P5,000 is delayed and often lost in transit.

GSIS: Denial queen?

In 1991, the GSIS refused to give a single cent to the heirs of a teacher (Librea) who died due to cirrhosis of the liver. The Supreme Court lambasted the GSIS for its anti-labor ruling. In 1990, the GSIS denied the claims for the death of a teacher (Belarmino), who suffered abortion when she fell while teaching inside a dilapidated barrio schoolhouse. The Supreme Court castigated the GSIS for its lack of care for the poor teacher.

The GSIS even denied the claim of its own personnel (Yosores) whom it forced to retire due to Parkinsons disease. It denied the claims for benefits for death due to cancer of the liver (Nemaria). The court scolded the GSIS for demanding the impossible even from the dead. The GSIS cannot even pay on time the measly pensions due to my parents. How can we continue to trust it to take care of our future?

Is GSIS really the weakest link? Is it even worse than the SSS? If so, then Congress should abolish it and replace it with another that will truly serve the people.

(For comments, you can reach the writer at the following e-mail address: josephus.jimenez@pcppi.com.ph)

DoE seeks end to penalty row between Napocor, Meralco

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. yesterday said his department had stepped in to mediate between National Power Corp. and Manila Electric Co. in their row concerning a P2-billion penalty slapped on the utility company.

Napocor earlier imposed a fine on Meralco for its alleged failure to buy 3,600 megawatts of power from the state firm in January. The volume was stipulated in their power sale contract.

"We have called several meetings among Meralco, Napocor and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. to try to find a compromise on the issue," Perez said.

Perez said the fine might be scrapped as part of a possible compromise settlement. He, however, said the concerned parties were still discussing all details of a possible agreement.

Perez said concerned parties were looking into the possibility of forging transitional supply contract that would replace the existing contract, which is good up to 2005.

A transitional contract may remain in effect until fully open competition is achieved in the power distribution industry.

Under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, full competition in the sector should be achieved not later than mid-2004.

Napocor officer in charge/president Roland Quilala said last week that the power firm would require Meralco to maintain its purchase commitments even as it already started operating its two affiliate gas-fired power plants.

Lopez-controlled First Gas Power Corp. has recently started commercial operations of its 1,000-mw Sta. Rita plant in Batangas. Its 500-mw San Lorenzo plant is expected to follow suit next month.

On Tuesday, Meralco president Jesus Francisco said the P2-billion penalty—which he said was unilateral and baseless—would raise the consumers' monthly bills by P1.16 per kilowatthour.

$45-M Albay mining venture obtains LGU endorsement

By Christine A. Gaylican

LAFAYETTE (Philippines) Inc. has obtained provincial and municipal endorsements for its $45-million Rapu Rapu polymetallic mining project in Legaspi, Albay.

These were the only remaining requirements needed by Lafayette to enable it to start the project and secure its $35-million financing from London-based Standard Bank of London Limited.

Lafayette Philippines president Rod D. Watt confirmed yesterday that the company finally received the endorsements of the provincial and municipal governments in the area.

Watt said the company had obtained its environmental clearance permits earlier.

The sole subsidiary in Asia of Australian mining firm Lafayette is now in final talks with its creditor for the project financing.

"Last October, Resource Service Group Pty. Ltd., acting on behalf of our bank in London, has completed an audit of the project and that, according to its report, it found it technically and economically feasible," Watt noted.

Watt said the company was in the process of identifying the debt and equity structure of the project financing. The company hopes to obtain the funds for the project between March and April this year.

The $35 million earmarked for the project would be used to finance the development of the mine and the construction of the processing plant. The amount will also cover the establishment of support infrastructure, including a pier capable of handling 8,000 dead-weight-ton ships, an accommodation village for the contractors and a 6-megawatt power plant.

IMF urges gov't . . .

From page B1

The government collects less than P100 billion in VAT yearly. The finance department estimated that some P70 billion in VAT taxes were not collected annually, or a tax leakage of nearly 50 percent.

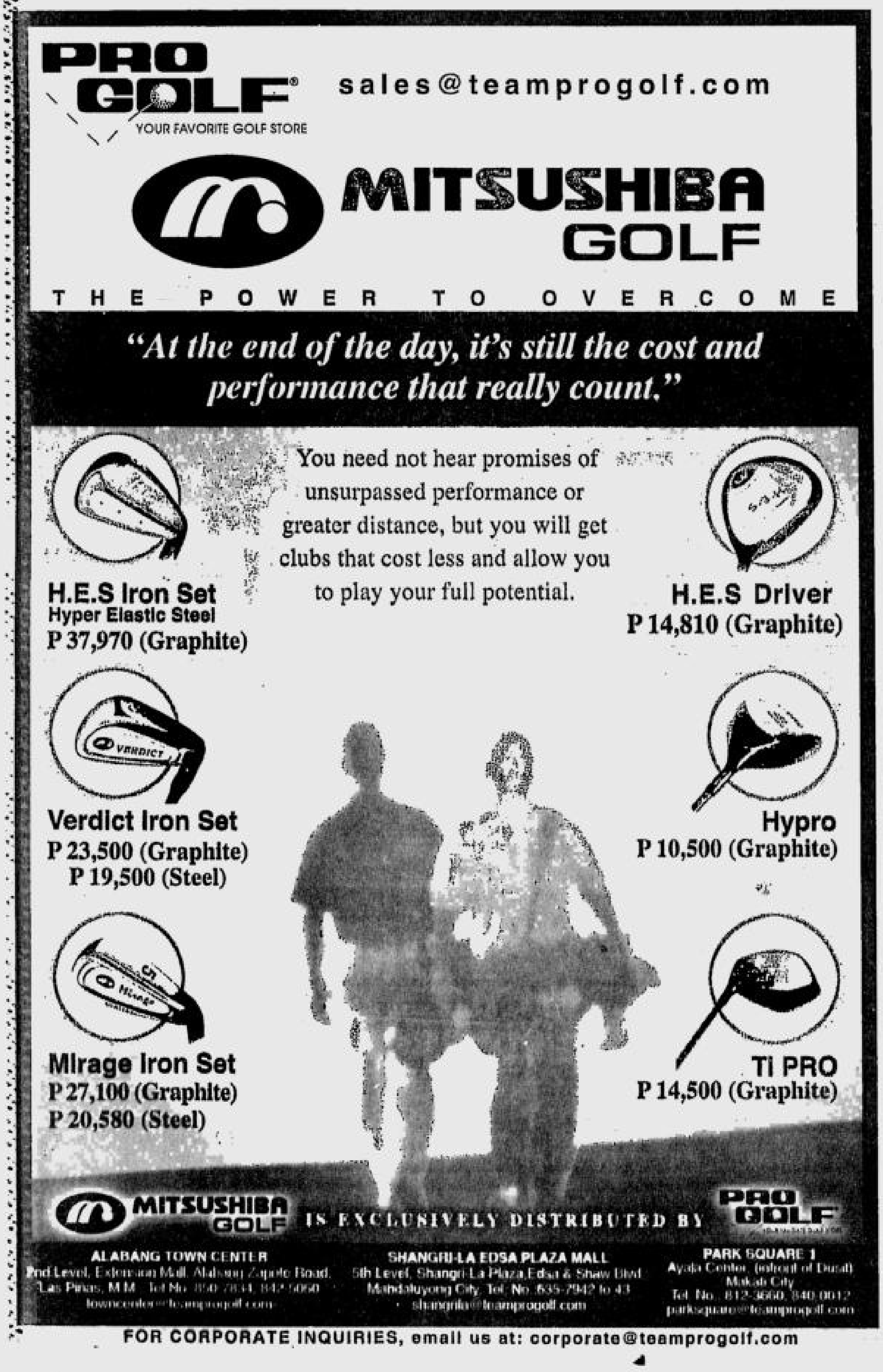
Based on a government study using 1998 data, the government should collect about P150 billion in VAT taxes.

The IMF said it believed that increasing tax collection was crucial to achieve sustainable growth and to restore fiscal balance.

Aside from improving tax administration, the government should raise its taxes. Otherwise, it would be hard to achieve a balanced budget by 2006, the IMF had stressed.

Camacho said the government would prioritize improving its tax collection and correcting some of the imbalances like adjusting the excise taxes on beer and tobacco to inflation as well as restructuring the taxes on automotive vehicles.

Also one of the priorities of the government was to shift from income taxation to a gross modified taxation that would reduce the taxes on individual taxpayers but effectively increase corporate taxes by cutting down some of the allowable deductions.



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Tarlac natural gas find turns out to be water

THE CARLOS P. Romulo Center was recently inaugurated by President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Philamlife Tower. The center houses 11 organizations, among them the CPR Foundation, Digital Philippines Foundation, Foundation for IT Education and Development, the Philippine Foundation for Global Concerns, the secretariat of the Apec Business Advisory Council, and the International Chamber of Commerce (Philippines). Shown unveiling the portrait of Gen. Carlos P. Romulo are Roberto R. Romulo, presidential senior adviser, the President, Mrs. Beth-Day Romulo and lawyer Ricardo Romulo.

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINE National Oil Co. said yesterday it has abandoned a potential gas well in Victoria town, Tarlac, after finding a water reservoir in the area instead of gas.

In a statement, the Department of Energy said the PNOC Energy Development Corp. and PNOC Exploration Corp. plugged and abandoned the well after efforts to separate the gas from the water failed.

"While the well flowed at a rate of one million standard cubic feet a day, extensive tests showed that the flow could not be sustained because of the water," the energy department disclosed.

"The PNOC-EDC has plugged and abandoned the well. The operator is currently demobilizing the rig," it said.

The Victoria-3 well was spudded in December and drilled to a depth of 9,000 feet, but natural gas flowed and flared at a depth of between 5,175 and 5,505 feet.

An energy official said authorities overestimated the potential of the Victoria-3 well.

"There is gas in the Victoria-3 well, but it is so small that we could not even measure it. So far, we could not consider it as viable," the official, who asked not to be identified, told reporters.

Despite this setback, officials said the consortium would continue drilling more wells in the Victoria area.

"There are gas reserves in the area, but we only have to find a much better flooring than the Victoria-3 well," Ismael Ocampo, head of the oil and gas division of the energy department, said.

Officials of PNOC-EDC said they would have to conduct more tests in the Victoria area before looking for new targets.

"We have to finish the evaluation of the Victoria-3 whether it is commercially viable or not. We know that there is gas in Central Luzon. We just have to determine the structure enough to hold on to the gas," PNOC president Thelmo Cunanan told a news conference.

Cunanan said the significance of the Victoria exploration was that it proved there was natural gas in the area.

"If that well is not viable, future drillings may be," Cunanan said.

When the Victoria gas find was announced last month, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she hoped it would spur exploration and drilling activities in the area.

"We believe it is about time that we further develop Central Luzon as we introduce a new industry—the natural gas industry," Ms Macapagal said.

The Victoria find came four months after the President inaugurated the Camago-Malampaya offshore natural gas project, which was estimated to have 114 billion cubic meters in recoverable reserves.

Camago-Malampaya is currently the country's most vital energy project.

Starting October this year, the first volume of natural gas will be extracted from the field.

A 501-kilometer underwater pipeline will bring in condensed natural gas to an offshore refinery in Santa Rita, Batangas.

The $4.8-billion investment of Shell, considered to be the world's biggest natural gas project, is projected to extract 200 barrels a day of natural gas.

The PNOC consortium had hoped to extract some 300 billion cubic feet of natural gas from Victoria, with the PNOC-EDC already mapping out a plan to build a 300-megawatt power plant to tap the reserves.

BellTel, AccessNet in DSL deal

By Abigail L. Ho

BELL Telecommunication Philippines Inc. has entered into a partnership with value-added service provider AccessNet Inc. to enable it to provide digital subscriber line (DSL) service to tenants of more than 10 buildings in Manila's business districts.

Under the agreement, BellTel will automatically provide DSL services to tenants of buildings where AccessNet owns and operates in-building telecommunications facilities.

BellTel will use AccessNet's infrastructure.

These buildings include Tektite East and West Towers, Taipan and JMT in Ortigas; One Beverly Place in Greenhills; Antel 2000, Herrera Towers, Multinational Bancorp. and Cityland 8 in Makati; Richville Tower in Alabang; and, VIP Building along Roxas Boulevard.

In a statement issued yesterday, BellTel vice president for sales and marketing Joby de Belen said the alliance would allow BellTel to offer a wide range of services to tenants of buildings under AccessNet's network, including telephone, data, leased lines, DSL Internet and e-services.

BellTel, in turn, will provide AccessNet with leased line facilities that will connect each of the buildings where AccessNet is present to its Network Operating Center. This will be done through BellTel's network.

"The deal with BellTel will allow us to gain an advantage over our competitors. By providing us with the E1s for the 10 buildings where AccessNet has been present for many years now, we can now excel more and guarantee better transport of services to our valued customers," AccessNet network manager Joseph Ander said.

De Belen said BellTel was also currently in talks with other value-added service providers for potential deals similar to the one it signed with AccessNet early this month.

Yehey unveils new Bancnet payment system

YEHEY.COM, the Internet portal of publicly listed technology firm i-Vantage Corp., has linked up with the Bancnet network to pioneer in the Philippines an online payment system using automated teller machines instead of credit cards.

In a news briefing yesterday, Yehey chief operating officer Kevin Khoe said the new service should account for about 35 percent of Yehey's total revenues by year's end.

He said the company was set on increasing its non-advertisement revenues from 10 percent to about 40 percent. Ad revenues currently account for 90 percent of its operations.

i-Vantage president and Yehey chief executive Dave de Leon said the new payment system should bolster business-to-consumer transactions in the Philippines. The system is built on a highly secured system worth about $1 million, he disclosed.

"YEHEY!ePayGate" will be one of the most complex and only Web-based system available locally, De Leon said.

The tie-up has made Yehey the first Internet company to join the Bancnet network.

Bancnet is the country's largest ATM network with 32 banks and 1,926 ATMs. Its nearest rival, Megalink, has 27 banks and 1,552 ATMs in its network.

De Leon said business-to-consumer transactions passing through the new online payment gateway would be faster, as approval or disapproval of a purchase could be done in real time. Credit card transactions require verification that usually takes time, he said.

Khoe said Yehey was set on attracting more tenants to its Internet portal. It currently has 15 tenants.

"We will add 20 more tenants in the next 20 days, and we hope to get 120 by yearend," Khoe told reporters.

"It will take us about six months to romp off revenues," he added. ***Doris C. Dumlao***

PNB deal seen concluded this month or early April

THE GOVERNMENT and the group of tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan are working double time to correct "minor" issues raised by the justice department and conclude a P25-billion debt-to-equity deal involving Philippine National Bank.

"These are minor issues that are being addressed. I am confident that the agreement would be signed this month or early next month," PNB president Feliciano Miranda Jr. said.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho disclosed earlier that the Department of Justice raised three "minor" points but had effectively approved the PNB agreement.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura also said the agreement would be signed soon, noting that the government and Tan's group were working aggressively to address the justice department's concerns.

Miranda said instead of using the term "offset" to refer to the transfer of P10 billion in government advances from PNB to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., the parties involved would use "dacion" or sale.

He said the justice department believed that "offsetting" could only take place if the case involved a debtor-creditor relationship.

The justice department also wanted the bank's chief finance officer to be nominated both by the government and Tan's group.

The last issue raised by the DOJ was on the payment of expenses related to the due diligence of interested buyers of PNB once the two parties are prepared to sell the block after three to five.years. ***Clarissa S. Batino***

Group backs bid to review RP's Cairns membership

THE INTERNATIONAL Federation of Agricultural Producers is supporting moves to review the Philippines' membership in the Cairns Group if Australia insists on banning the country's fresh fruit exports.

"If the Philippines threatens to bolt out, it would be a very good negotiating strategy because Cairns (being led by Australia) is very proud of its developing country membership. This would be a blow to them," IFAP secretary general David King told the INQUIRER.

The Cairns Group is generally regarded as the "little guy's" club in the business of world trade, as it serves as a powerful lobby on the side of the World Trade Organization's "underdogs."

The 18-nation bloc was named after the Australian city where it was formed in 1986. It came into play during the WTO's Doha conference in Qatar last year.

The Cairns Group promotes the interests of big farm-exporting countries, hoping to free up trade of farm produce.

In many of its appearances, especially in Doha, the Cairns Group has lined up against the European Union, the United States and Japan on farm subsidies.

The European Union, in particular, has said it will refuse the group's call to scrap all farm subsidies.

The Philippine government earlier challenged Australia to live up to its principles as a champion of free trade by finally lifting its ban on Philippine fresh fruit exports to Australia.

"Australia must break the ice and demonstrate openness in considering Philippine interests, especially since Australia leads the Cairns group of the WTO (World Trade Organization), which advocates open trading in Asia and the Pacific," presidential adviser on agriculture and job creation Luis Lorenzo Jr. said in an interview.

Christine A. Gaylican

DOTC reviewing guidelines on roll-on, roll-off vessels

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications is reviewing its guidelines discouraging the use of roll-on, roll-off, or ro-ro, vessels.

The review is in line with recommendations sent to the government by Norwegian maritime industry think tank Shipdeco and the Japan International Cooperation Agency to develop ro-ro shipping in the Philippines.

Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said in a statement that the Philippines had already considered these recommendations but the country's bad experiences with ro-ro vessels stopped the government from implementing them.

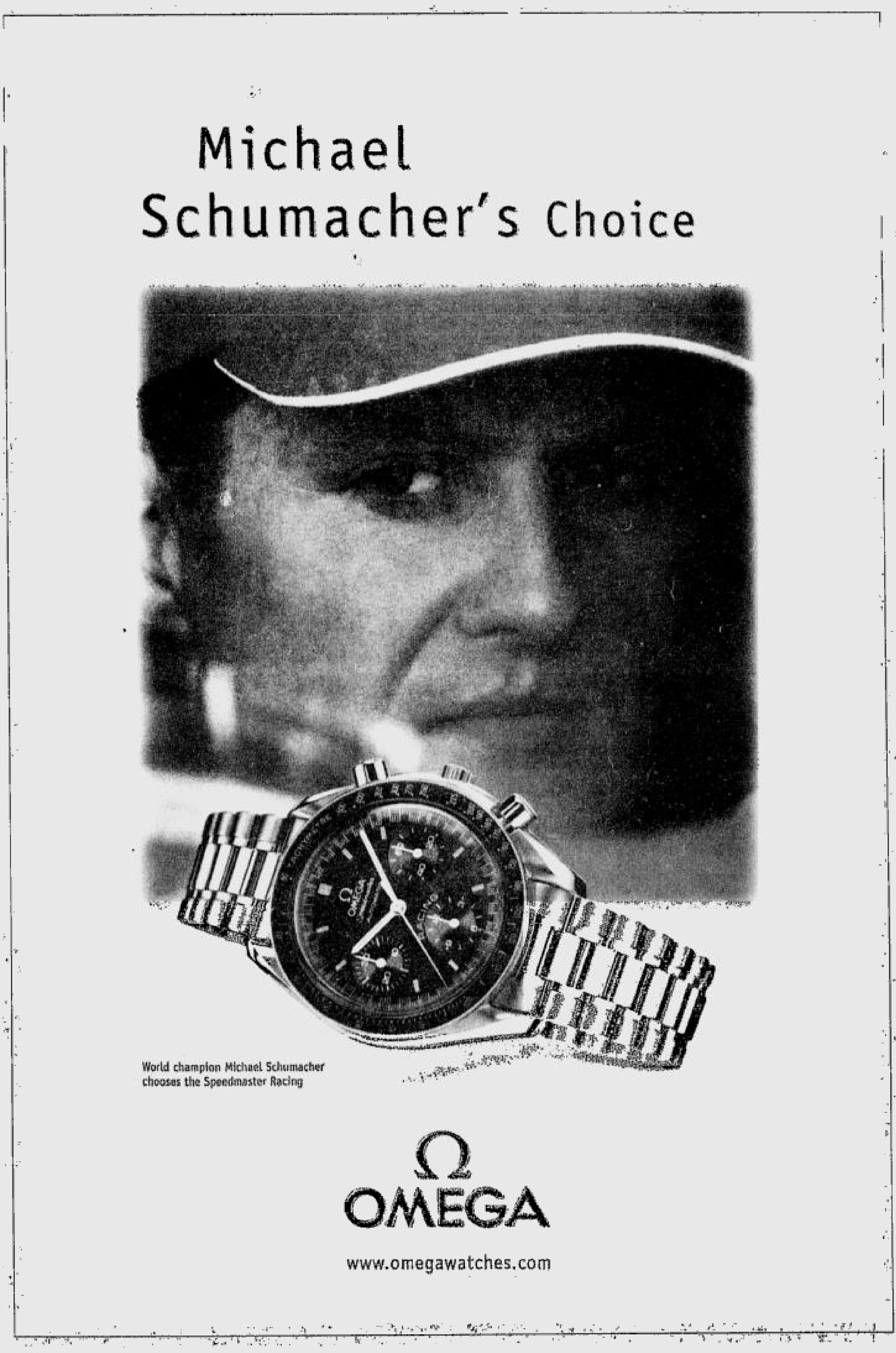
Considerations would be given to trade unions and stevedoring companies that could lose some revenues should ro-ro shipping becomes the norm, he said.

Ro-ro shipping does not require sophisticated piers and wharves as vessels simply slide up and down a makeshift pier. Manual labor in loading and unloading cargoes is likewise eliminated.

Alvarez conceded, though, that expanding inter-island ro-ro services would result in cheaper and more efficient cargo transshipment among the country's islands.

The DOTC is set to meet with shipping industry leaders to reassess the ro-ro shipping system.

Abigail L. Ho



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3 foreign firms to handle PLDT, Globe bond flotations

By Clarissa S. Batino

FOREIGN banks Salomon Smith Barney, Credit Suisse First Boston, and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter were tapped by PLDT and Globe Telecom Inc. to handle their long-term bond floats totaling about $800 million.

Sources said Salomon Smith Barney would underwrite an 18-year, $170 million to $300 million worth of bond issue for Globe Telecom, which has started a foreign road show to entice investors to buy its debt papers.

Credit Suisse and Morgan Stanley were tapped by PLDT to handle its $500-million bond flotation to be sold after Globe's fund-raising exercise.

The three investment banks had helped handle some of the government's previous borrowings, including a $750-million, 16-year bond issue in January and a $1-billion, seven-year bond float early this month.

The PLDT and Globe borrowings were approved by the policy-making Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas last week.

The telecom giant wanted to take advantage of declining spreads for Philippine borrowings to raise cheap funds to finance its expansion and to pay off debts.

PLDT needed to raise about $1.3 billion to settle maturing debts between now and 2004. As of last year, the country's biggest telephone company recorded outstanding debts of $2.9 billion. Together with its subsidiaries, PLDT's total borrowings stood at $3.5 billion as of 2001.

The BSP noted that a long-term borrowing would be favorable to the country's debt profile because it would not add up to the obligations that had to be met in the next three to five years.

But the concentration in the long-term market may eventually crowd out other potential borrowers.

So far, only JG Summit Corp. and Filinvest Land Inc. have raised foreign funds from the debt market this year.

The central bank welcomed the foreign fund-raising activities of the private sector and interpreted this as positive sign that local companies were already expanding.

PLDT was supposed to issue $250 million worth of short- and medium-term bonds during the third quarter last year but adverse market conditions made the borrowing very expensive for the telecom company.

MJCI turns around with ₱390-M profit

AFTER a number of operating losses, Manila Jockey Club Inc. (MJCI) posted a turnaround last year with a net income of P389.9 million from its gaming operations and real property development.

MJCI is diversifying into real estate development by redeveloping its 16-hectare San Lazaro property in Manila. Under MJCI's business plan, the SM Group will construct a shopping mall occupying 4 ha of the property. The remaining 12 ha will be developed into a mixed-use commercial and residential area.

Last year, MJCI acquired a 77-ha property in Carmona, Cavite, from KPPI Land Corp., where a new, world-class racetrack will be located along with a residential estate that overlooks the racetrack, a hotel, an equestrian club, and a stable complex. Construction of the racetrack is ongoing. Racing is expected to start in January 2003.

MJCI's gaming revenues, on the other hand, reached P2.89 billion last year and the company said it has been increasing due to an aggressive marketing expansion of its OTB (off-track betting) network, now numbering 222.

In partnership with one of Australia's largest gaming companies, Jupiters, and TAB Philippines, MJCI is expanding its OTB network nationwide. From its gaming operations, MJCI contributed P508 million to local and national taxes last year, and donated to various charitable and civic institutions.

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Asian leaders conspicuously absent at summit

MONTERREY, Mexico—Leaders from Asian powerhouses ranging from Japan to China and India will be conspicuous by their absence at a high-profile UN summit that opens here Thursday to finance the war on poverty.

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is the only Asian leader scheduled to turn up at the two-day summit session that caps three days of ministerial-level discussions.

The Philippines is sending Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

United Nations officials insist that the absence of Asian leaders will in no way detract from the value of the summit, stressing that many Asian countries had sent ministers to negotiate.

World Trade Organization director general Mike Moore neatly sidestepped the issue.

"I know there are a lot of Asia-Pacific leaders assembling in this country this year at the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) meeting," he said, when asked about the Asian vacuum at a press briefing.

But the decision of leaders such as Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to stay away nonetheless stands in contrast to the attendance of US President George W. Bush and even Cuban President Fidel Castro.

"They should at least have sent a minister here, since Japan is a major donor," said an Asian source at the conference.

Japan, the world's second largest economy, is represented by a vice minister, according to UN officials.

For other conference participants, the Japanese absence calls into question Tokyo's willingness to follow the lead of the United States and Europe in trying to stem a slide in overseas assistance.

"The US and Europe have now made further pledges," prominent Harvard University professor and activist Jeffrey Sachs told a news conference.

"Japan has been in the process of cutting aid and we need to hear a similar message from Japan. There's no doubt about it. We are still waiting for the message from Japan as well."

Sachs also serves as special advisor to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in a campaign to halve the proportion of people living in abject poverty—estimated at 1.2 billion people now—by 2015.

Ahead of the conference here, which began Monday, both the United States and Europe announced increases in their annual contributions to development assistance, moves that have been warmly welcomed by UN officials. *AFP*

Compaq shareholders approve merger

HOUSTON—Compaq Computer Corp. shareholders on Wednesday approved Hewlett-Packard Co.'s nearly $20-billion acquisition of the company in a clear victory that could pave the way for the computer industry's largest merger ever.

Unlike the contested battle for HP shareholder votes, in which HP claimed a narrow victory but opponents had yet to concede defeat, there was no organized opposition to the merger on the Compaq side. The meeting in a Houston hotel ended in 45 minutes with the vote won by a ratio of 9 to 1.

Compaq chief executive Michael Capellas told shareholders it was a "momentous" day.

"Both Compaq and HP have long, proud heritages and, believe me, we are proud of our heritage, but this was about creating the next-generation industry leader," Capellas said.

Other than the topic, there were few similarities to the rancorous meeting Tuesday of HP shareholders.

At that meeting, shareholders booed HP chief executive Carly Fiorina and gave a standing ovation to dissident board member and shareholder Walter Hewlett, who waged a four-month battle against the merger. Only a couple of hundred people attended Compaq's shareholder meeting, filling half of the conference room at the Wyndham Hotel in Houston.

The most caustic question from the audience was a request for details about Capellas' new salary as president of the combined company. He said terms had yet to be discussed.

Since news of the merger was made public on Sept. 3, Compaq shares have fallen 12.39 percent and HP has fallen 21.59 percent, both underperforming No. 1 computer maker International Business Machines Corp., which rose 5.5 percent in the same period.

While the Compaq approval moves the merger along, the final results of HP's vote on Tuesday in Cupertino, California, may take weeks. HP claimed it won a narrow majority, but Walter Hewlett said the vote was too close to call.

Hewlett, the son of one of HP's founders, opposed the merger, saying it would hurt the company's strong printer division and saddle it with Compaq's low-margin PC business.

HP's Fiorina said the combined companies would have more than $80 billion in revenues and sell everything from PCs to printers to large computer servers, positioning it to compete with top computer company IBM.

HP, which announced job cuts of 6,000 last year, earned $408 million on revenues of $45 billion in fiscal 2001.

One shareholder who attended the Compaq meeting said he thought the merger would be good—for Dell Computer Corp., the No. 1 PC maker. Dell pushed Compaq out of the top market share spot in mid-2001 through an aggressive price war.

"Right now, with the economy starting to pick up and Dell pushing aggressively to get market share, this would be a bad time to lose focus trying to do a merger," said Ed Hardin, who owned both Compaq and Dell shares.

"I can't lose either way because I own a lot of Dell stock," he added.

Another said he worried about the impact on Houston. *Reuters*

MATIBAY ANG PILIPINO

Insular Life's Advertising Campaign

Who is the Filipino? Malay race. Brown skin. Medium height. Black hair. Then again, to borrow that critical question from a past Ms. Universe pageant, what is the essence of a true Filipino?

If we probe deeper and sift through the Filipino character, we would find that the Filipinos are a group of people who share a past characterized by many struggles as well as triumphs. History has dealt us with centuries of colonization, an authoritarian regime, the birth of hope with the EDSA People Power, followed by brief periods of ecpnomic progress, the impeachment of a president, and the rise of the second EDSA People Power that overthrew an administration, only to be plunged into a world-wide financial crisis which, to this day, still hounds us.

Our past struggles, as well as the challenges we now face have given us profound lessons. Always, we have been witness to the Filipinos' faith in God, love for family, resilience in the face of adversity, optimism, compassion, and enormous capacity for hard work and sacrifices.

These are the reasons why the Filipino has always triumphed over adverse conditions. Somehow, he will rise above the obstacle and emerge triumphant. That is the Filipino spirit... it can bend but it will never break. That is why we can indeed say, "**Matibay ang Pilipino.**"

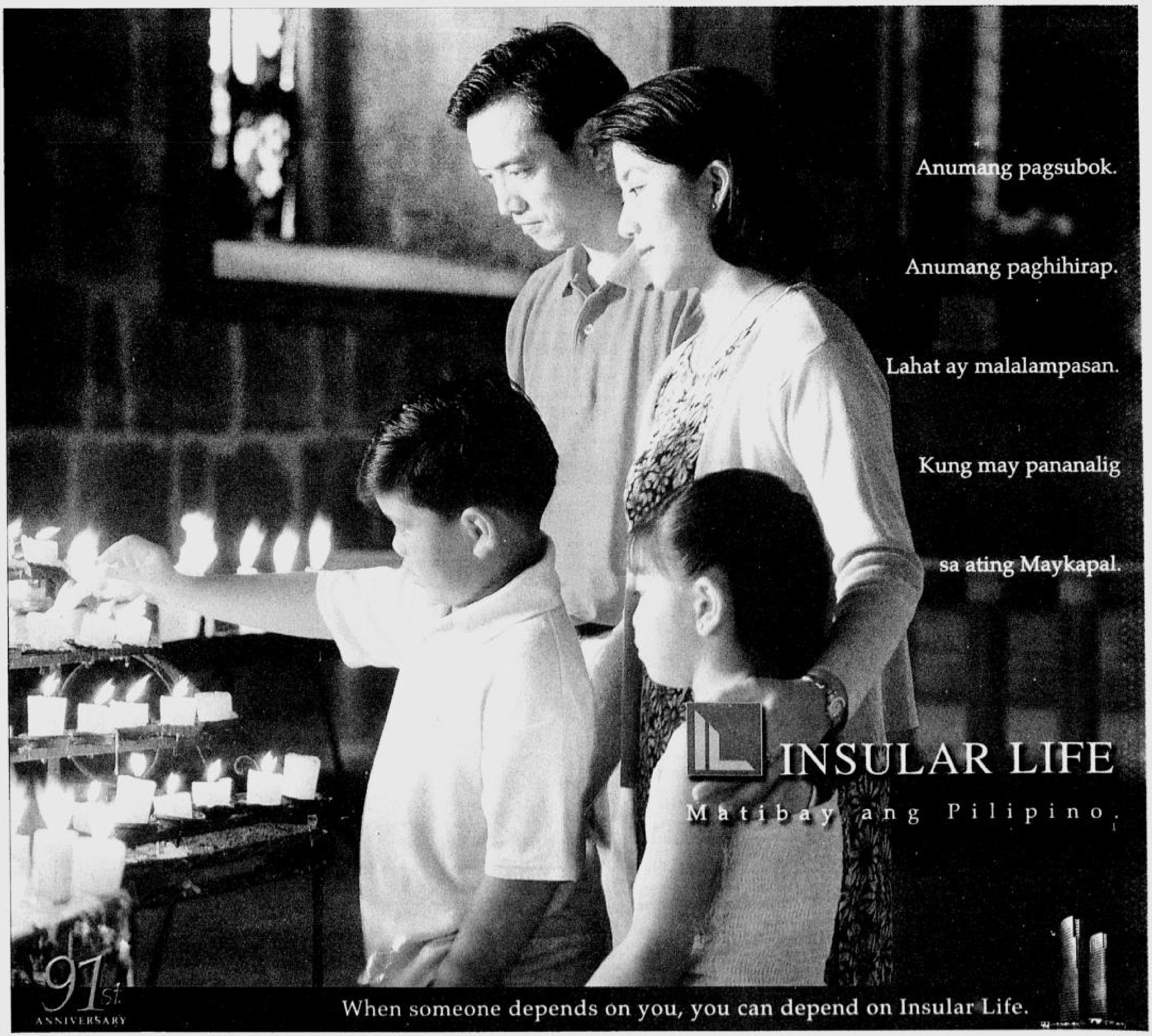
How to make this realization foremost in the public's consciousness so as to bring back the pride in being a Filipino was a challenge that Insular Life undertook. During its 91st founding anniversary in November 2001, Insular Life launched the "**Matibay ang Pilipino**" print advertising campaign, a campaign aimed at highlighting the many positive traits of the Filipino.

The print campaign is composed of a series of three advertising lay-outs. One layout highlights our tremendous faith in God. In the "Church" scene, the basic message is "Anumang pagsubok, anumang paghihirap, lahat ay malalampasan kung may pananalig sa ating Maykapal."

Another lay-out highlights our society's basic institution, the family, and portrays the Filipino's dedication and immeasurable capacity for hard work and sacrifice in order to provide for his loved ones. A father comes home to a warm embrace from his daughter after a hard day's work and tells himself ... " Puhunan man ay pawis, puhunan man ay dugo, sulit lahat sa matamis na ngiti ng aking bunso."

A third lay-out, "Teenagers by the window," focuses on the Filipinos' spirit of "bayanihan" and "pagdadamayan" ... "Kahit may lungkot at may tamlay, kahit may pagsubok sa buhay, may ginhawang naghihintay basta't ikaw ay may kadamay."

Through its **"Matibay ang Pilipino"** ad campaign, Insular Life brings to attention the many positive character traits of the Filipino, a reminder that there is still so much good in us, and that these traits will enable us to prevail over any adverse condition that will come our way.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FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2002

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PERSONAL

ACCOUNTANT

Financial Statement Cert. 09185340133 Mercy Lim, CPA

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WE BUILD HOUSES 4178012

MASSAGE

'02 CAMPUS IDOL 6890170

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

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•CHEAP LBAHAY 9260424•

CLOSED ALUM VAN 8212970

LBAHAY 7113540

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2 storey concrete residence
FA: 524 sqm. 4BDR/3TB;
DEN/TB; sprawling Lanai
Dining; Kitchen; 2-car garage
LEASEBACK optional to buyer
Tels: 818-2781; 751-5472

MANILA

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PROVINCIAL

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HOUSE & LOT

MARIKINA

Grnlnd bnew 3br 2M 9487112

Rush! Calumpang LA 293 2BR+1TB 0917-2429078

MUNTINLUPA

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273m² 8T/m² Greenwoods Subd. 641-7376 • 0917-4792501 Vida

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QUEZON CITY

2 STY NR. SM FVW 7357131

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Xavierville 10.5M 0917-7918952

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Acropolis C-5 414; 423; 550 750m² P34-38T/m² also hses 4-5BR P14-34M 633-7601-03

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LA932 VLot for Industrial Lot Baesa QC • 928-1469

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COMML/RESDL

PROVINCIAL

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APARTMENT

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MAKATI

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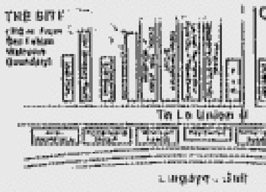

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Fresh Sea Wind Resort offers unique facilities to suit informal but very effective corporate meetings.

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Package Per Unit
- *435 sq.m. min. lot area; Family size swimming pool; Nipa hut with 2 bedrooms, c.r. bath, refrigerator, kit, sink, television, bar-b-que stand; Landscape includes: 2 mango trees, 8 coconut trees, grass, 15 Indian trees & flowering plants - white sand ground; Children slide, swing & seesaw; Terraced lots*

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Marketing Agents: Topland Management & Marketing Corporation
Tel. No. 442-2338; 444-4137; 304-1214 (digitel) e-mail: alpapcm@skyinet.com
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Cars/Vans Cheap 8203694

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MB HIAce L3 Urvan 8257135

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2% w/o Taking Car 8966033

2% w/o taking car 7262780

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2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

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High quality tube amplifier & pre-amp, tubes, kits, pin jacks & cords from Japan. We can test it 4 you. Call us Mon-Sat 8-5 pm 5413575 / 8202552 Sun 09194084603-Cristy or 09164873730-Liza

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Comp Sci, Commerce grad apply at COMPEX Call 740-4960 #341 GBW Bldg Quezon Ave 4 Sucat, Las Pinas, Edsa Alabang, Cavite Area.

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OFC STAFF 4374639 NIKKY

Ofc staff 91334470 Gerald

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

Rush Grge Sale 09196541403

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MUNOZ BRIONES PAWNSHOP
AUCTION SALE
• April 01, 2002 •
All unredeemed articles up to November 1-30, 2001
in the following branches:
•354 Roosevelt Ave QC 9AM
•Pinatubo St. Mand 10AM
•Libertad St corner Sierra Madre St. 11AM
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PUBLIC NOTICES

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MLM-ALLAN (0917)4661122

Need Buyers of Chicken SKIN, FATS, WING & BACK Call Bong at • 740-3282

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of BENJAMIN C. GUTIERREZ has been extrajudicially settled among the heirs as per Doc. No. 21; Page No. 6; Book No. III; Series of 2002 of Notary Public Barbara Aleli H. Briones. PDI-Mar. 8,15,22, 2002

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the following Official Reciepts of the following Company which was found to be lost since year 2000: MERCK INC. w/ OR# 18285 & 17734 & HEMISPHERE-LEO BURNETT w/ OR# 23756, 23758 & 23770 Lost all Original Copies of Official Reciepts

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, In this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen.

INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

Xerox

Q. Why do we call a photocopy a Xerox copy?

A. The process is known as xerography, a term derived from ancient Greek words meaning 'dry writing'. The photocopier was patented by Chester Carlson in 1938 and first marketed in 1947 by the Xerox company of the United States. But, as in the case of Coke, Band-Aid, Frigidaire, Kodak and many other product names, the registered trademark Xerox soon became generic for any sort of photocopy.

For the Record. The sex of the unborn child is determined at the instant of fertilization, and it is the father's sperm cell that decides it. Every ovum, or egg, that a woman produces is female in the sense that it contains an X, or a female, sex chromosome. In a man, only half of the sperm cells carry an X chromosome, while the other half carry a Y, which is the male sex chromosome. If an X sperm cell happens to enter the Y ovum, the result is a fertilized egg with two X chromosomes that will become a girl. If, however, a Y sperm cell fertilizes the egg, the result is a fertilized egg that has one X chromosome and one Y chromosome, and that will become a boy.

Name Game. On March 14, 1903, Meralco was established by Charles M. Swift of the U.S. Its acronym originally stood for Manila Electric Railroad and Lighting Company, having been the first company to be given the franchise to operate the city's *tranvia*, or electric car, transport system and supply electricity to Manila.

WORD WATCH

Defibrillator (di fib rih layt or) : an emergency apparatus that delivers an electric current to the heart to restore normal heart rhythm.

PDI – March 22, 2002

National Power Corporation

March 18, 2002

INVITATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND TO BID

The National Power Corporation (NPC) of the Republic of the Philippines invites all interested Cargo Protection Services Providers for Steaming Coal, to accredit and to bid with NPC for One Year Contract Pre-Shipment Inspection of NPC's steaming coal importations for its power plants and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for the year 2002-2003.

Accreditation forms are available for issuance at the office of the Corporate Fuel Management Department (CFMD), Building 2, Second Floor, NPC-OBC, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of a registration fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00). Those who have been previously accredited shall re-apply for compliance with the new requirements. Cargo Protection Services Provider with previous dealings/business relations with coal suppliers/traders/producers need not apply.

Accreditation shall be evaluated based on the set of criteria in determining the technical and financial capability to perform the contract. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished accreditation form is on **April 5, 2002**. Bidding among accredited Cargo Protection Service Providers shall be held on **April 26, 2002.**

(Sgd.) **FROILAN A. TAMPINCO**
Vice President
Head, GenCo 2 and Chairman
Fuel Procurement Committee (FPC)

(PDI – Mar. 22, 24 & 25, 2002)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES LOS BAÑOS

College, Laguna

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) invites interested parties to submit sealed bids for the public bidding (rebid) of X-Ray Detection System for Foreign Substances in Fresh Fruits consisting:

1) X-ray unit	1 set
2) X-ray line sensor	1 set
3) Foreign substance detection unit	
4) Utility	
5) Central control unit	1 set
6) Operation panel	1 set
7) Carrying conveyor	1 set
8) Casing	1 set
9) Reject system	1 set
10) TV monitor	1 set
11) UPS	1 set

The schedule of the bidding activities is as follows:

Particulars	Date/Time	Place
Pre-qualification	April 1-3 / 8:30AM - 5:00PM	SPMO
Issuance of Bid Documents	April 4-8 / 8:30AM - 5:00PM	SPMO
Pre-bid conference	April 19 Fri. / 10:00AM	SPMO
Opening/submission of bids	April 26 Fri. / 10:00AM	SPMO

Interested parties may secure the checklist of pre-qualification requirements and submit pre-qualification documents to the Supply & Property Management Office (SPMO).

Only pre-qualified bidders shall be allowed to secure bid documents from SPMO and participate in the bidding process.

The UPLB reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the UPLB. The UPLB likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **DR. TERESITA M. ESPINO**
Chair, PBAC

(PDI - March 22 & 23, 2002)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNPC Complex, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City
Tel. No. 893-1320 loc. 5285

INVITATION FOR BIDS

1. PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) has received an ODA loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as JBIC), in the amount of 14,460,000,000.00 Yen towards the cost of the No. Negros Geothermal Power Projects and intends to apply the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for the SUPPLY AND DELIVERY of 350 Joints 5" O.D. Drill Pipes under FGK-10883. Disbursement of an ODA Loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans". No party other than PNOC-EDC shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claim to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As for the remaining portion, PNOC-EDC will take appropriate measures for finance.
2. JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as PNOC-EDC, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC;
   a) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
   b) will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded by JBIC ODA Loans if it at any times determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practice in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.
3. PNOC-EDC now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders from eligible source countries for the supply of the Goods for the purpose of the Project.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information on the bid form and inspect the bidding documents at the office of Purchasing Division c/o Mr. Raffy S. Teylan, PNOC-Energy Development Corporation, PNPC Complex, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1201 Makati City, Tel. No. 893-1320 Loc. 5285, Fax No. 815-0416.
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be secured by any interested eligible bidder starting March 13, 2002, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of two hundred pesos (PHP 200.00) Philippine Currency.
6. For purposes of clarifying matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on March 22, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. at the above address.
7. The estimated date of award is on July 13, 2002.
8. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the amount indicated in the tender documents, and in the form acceptable to PNOC-EDC. The bids must be delivered to the above address on or before 2:00 p.m. of April 30, 2002. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.
9. PNOC-EDC will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
10. PNOC-EDC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground for PNOC-EDC's action.

(Sgd.) SERGIO A.F. APOSTOL
Chairman/President & CEO

(PDI – Mar. 22, 2002)

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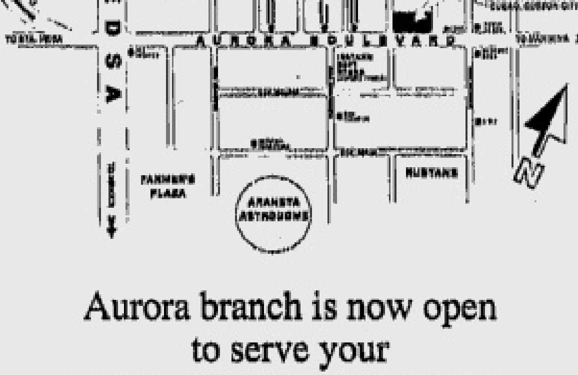

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Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER

East Avenue, Quezon City 100 Philippines
Tel. No. 925-2401

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites sealed written bids for six (6) months (July-December 2002) contract Pharma Medical/Laboratory and Foodstuffs Supplies.

Only duly accredited bidders/suppliers will be allowed to participate in the bidding. List of the requirements to be submitted:

1. Letter of Intent
2. SEC Registration
3. Business License
4. License to Operate (BFAD)
5. Financial Statement (last 2 years)
6. ITR (last 2 years)
7. DOH Accreditation
8. Location Map of Office
9. List of Clients

All interested bidders/suppliers must submit their accreditation documents on or before **April 15, 2002** at Purchasing Division.

The PHC serves the right to disqualify any prospective bidder/s if found if they have submitted falsified documents and/or information the right to accept or reject any bid, and annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) ROMEO J. SANTOS, M.D.
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI – Mar. 22, 23, 24, 28, 31 & Apr. 1, 2002)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
BRANCH 4 MANILA

RE: PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF
MINOR CHILD PATRICK EMMARSON
DE GUZMAN

SP. PROC. NO. 02-102834

SONNY JOHN G. PALAC AND
ARLENE S. DE GUZMAN PALAC
Petitioners.
x-----------------------------x

ORDER

This a verified petition filed by petitioners Sonny John G. Palac and Arlene S. De Guzman Palac, praying that after due notice, publication and hearing, the minor Patrick Emmarson De Guzman be declared as their legally adopted child.

Finding the petition to be sufficient in form and substance, let this petition be set for hearing on May 24, 2002 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning before this Court located at Rm 364 Third Flr., City Hall, Manila, after this Order shall have been published at the expense of the petitioners in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines for three (3) consecutive weeks after raffle.

All interested persons in this petition may appear at the aforesaid date of hearing and show cause, if any, why this petition should not be granted.

The Social Worker of this Court, Ms. Eleonor M. Maglaro, is hereby ordered to conduct a home visitation and prepare a social case study reports on the person of the petitioners and herein minor sought to be adopted and to submit the same to this Court on or before the scheduled hearing of this petition.

Let a copy of this Order and the copy of the petition be served upon the Office of the Solicitor General at 134 Amorsolo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City and the social worker of this Court, and the same be posted at the Bulletin Board in the premises of this Court, at three conspicuous places, at the expense of the petitioners.

SO ORDERED.
Manila, February 19, 2002.

(Sgd.) SOCORRO B. INTING
Presiding Judge

(PDI—March 8, 15 & 22, 2002)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
ADB-ASSISTED
SUBIC BAY AREA MUNICIPALITIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
City of Olongapo

21 March 2002

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank herein referred to as the "Bank", in various currencies towards the cost of the Subic Bay Area Municipal Development Project and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be eligible for payments under contract for the Construction of the Elicaño Bridge, located at the City of Olongapo.
2. The project calls for the construction of a single span reinforced concrete deck girder bridge having a total length of eighteen (18) meters. The concrete deck has a clear width of 7.32 meters having a pedestrian sidewalks of 1.10 meters. The bridge's approach consists of 168 meters concrete pavement at the Elicaño Street with a 342 meters concrete pavement connecting road to the former Old Hospital Area. The abutments are founded on 0.40m x 0.40m reinforced concrete piles. The bridge will be provided with street lights to enhance visibility at night. The project also includes the landscaping for the roadside development.
3. The City Government of Olongapo, an Implementing Agency for the project is inviting contractors accredited by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for a prequalification to bid for the abovementioned project. Interested bidders classified and registered with the Inter-Agency Committee on Registration and Classification of Contractors as "Medium B" on Roads and Bridges and prequalified by the Local PBAC are eligible to bid for this project. Experience on related project is necessary.
4. Pre-C Forms shall be made available to contractors classified above upon submittal of Letter of Intent and copy of latest PCAB License and payment of non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 at the PBAC Secretariat, City Planning and Development Office, Olongapo City. Bring original copies of PCAB License for authentication. Schedule of activities are as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Submission of Letter of Intent	March 22 to April 5, 2002
b. Issuance of Pre-Forms	March 22 to April 5, 2002
c. Submission of Pre-C Statement	April 8 to 19, 2002
d. Notification of Prequalified/Predisqualified Contractors	May 13 to 17, 2002
e. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 20 to 24, 2002
f. Submission and Opening of Bids	June 24, 2002

5. Complete set of Bid/Tender Documents will be issued to pre-qualified contractors upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 at the City Treasurer's Office
6. Submission of Bid Documents shall not be later than **June 24, 2002** at 2:00 p.m. and shall be opened at the City Council Session Hall on the date mentioned above.
7. The City of Olongapo reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informalities contained therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government.

(Sgd.) KATHERINE H. GORDON
City Mayor and PBAC Chairman

(PDI – Mar. 22, 26 & Apr. 1, 2002)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

March 6, 2002

INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Housing Authority is inviting interested contractors who have completed similar projects (at least 50% of Contract Cost) within the last three (3) years and accredited with PCAB/IAC, to bid for the contract listed below:

Contract Package	Scope of Works	Contract Cost (Php)	PCAB Category	IAC Classification
1. PCSO-NHA Kapalaran Village Project, Camarin, Caloocan City	Land development	30.00 M.	AA	Large "A" for Roads

A. Eligibility Statement forms, bid documents/ plans as well other information are available at the Office of the BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, NHA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City upon submission of the following a) Letter of Intent; b) PCAB/IAC License; c) Certificate of Completion/ Acceptance and Contract Agreement of completed similar project; and d) Presentation of above-cited original documents for authentication purposes.
B. Interested contractors may contact the BAC Technical/Secretariat at telephone nos. 920-5816 and 926-4901 to 55 local 282 for additional information.
C. Payment of non-refundable fee of P2,500.00 per set shall be received only from authorized representatives.
D. Bid deposits shall be in the form of cash, Manager's or Cashier's Check.
E. Deadline of submission of LOI/issuance of bid documents is on April 2, 2002. Schedule of Pre-Bid Conference and other bidding activities shall be announced through bid bulletins.
F. NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive formally any minor defect thereon, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
Assistant General Manager

(PDI - March 16, 22 & 30, 2002)

CASCADE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The *Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development Programme* is an integrated development project of the Department of Agriculture jointly funded by the Government of the Philippines and the European Union.

Invitation to Local Consultant(s) to submit Letter of Interest Assessment of PMAS Implementation in Nueva Vizcaya

Individual or Team of local consultant(s) are invited to submit letter of interest to assess results and impact of the pilot implementation of Production and Marketing Analysis Service (PMAS) in Nueva Vizcaya. This was jointly implemented by the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) and CASCADE in September 2000-August 2001. Specifically, the consultant will undertake the following:

1. Review the PMAS approach, activities and tools, and come up with specific recommendations for improvement.
2. Assess the role and structure of various stakeholders as partners in implementing the PMAS vis-a-vis its intended function and make necessary recommendations.
3. Determine adoption and utilization rate of farmers, coop members and LGUs and impact of the PMAS trainings vis-a-vis the predicted results and impact.
4. Determine scheme for institutionalizing the PMAS by integrating it in the LGUs' extension activities and plans.

Letters of interest should be submitted no later than **01 April 2002.** This should include interested consultant's relevant track record on agricultural marketing information system, research studies, and monitoring and evaluation in the areas of price monitoring and training design. Full terms of reference and letters of invitation to submit proposals will be issued to short listed candidates before **10 April 2002.** The successful contractor will be required to provide 2 months of consultancy services to undertake aforementioned activities.

THE PROJECT CO-DIRECTORS
DA-CASCADE
Bonfal West, 3700 Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya
Tel. No. (078) 321-2605 & 321-4128
Telefax No. (078) 321-3611

(PDI - March 22 & 24, 2002)

CASCADE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CARABALLO & SOUTHERN CORDILLERA
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
A Program for Self-Reliance
Bayombong 3700, Nueva Vizcaya
Telefax: (078) 3213611 • Tel.: (078) 3214128 or 3212605
Email: cascade_erp@hotmail.com

INVITATION TO SUBMIT LETTER OF INTEREST FOR Local Technical Assistance/Specialist in HEALTH AND NUTRITION

In the scope of its Social Development component CASCADE is in need of local Technical Assistance/ Specialist to provide both technical and managerial assistance in the implementation of its Nutrition and Health Programmes.

Intents are invited from qualified candidates with highly relevant experience to undertake works hereunder described:

- ➢ Review of the existing Programme strategies and plans at the provincial and municipal levels and come up with recommendation to improve strategies;
- ➢ Prepare modified training modules on basic and upgrading courses of Nutrition Programme;
- ➢ Provide regular technical supervision on the implementation of the Nutrition programme in collaboration with the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Benguet;
- ➢ Provide direct assistance to the provincial offices in the implementation of nutrition related activities in collaboration with the Provincial Nutrition Action Office and the Municipal Nutrition Action Offices;
- ➢ Participate in the preparation of the Annual Work Planning for the Social Development Component of CASCADE.

Candidates must be physically fit to travel in the uplands.

Deadline of Submission of Letter of Intent with full CV shall be on **15 April 2002** and must be addressed to:

THE PROJECT CO-DIRECTORS
DA-CASCADE
Bonfal West, 3700 Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya
Tel.: (078) 321-4128 or 321-2605
Fax: (078) 321-3611

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

March 20, 2002

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bidding and Awards Committee of the Department of Agrarian Reform is inviting all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for its janitorial and security services.

Instruction to Bidders will be available starting **April 1, 2002**, at the Office of the Chief, General Services Division, located at the basement, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Terms, conditions and specifications will be discussed during the pre-bidding conference on **April 5, 2002**, 9:00 a.m. at H.R.D Training Center, DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Interested bidders are required to pay the non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) before submitting the technical and financial documents not later than 9:00 o'clock in the morning of **April 22, 2002** at the HRD Center, DAR Compound.

The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **ROLANDO LI. QUERUBIN**
Undersecretary for PMAO and
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 22 & April 1, 2002)

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SY TIU CHING

a.k.a.

JOHNNY LO

July 10, 1919 - March 20, 2002

Co-Founder of CHANCELLOR SHOES

Survived by wife **Rosario de Dios**; children and in-laws **Aida & Omar Bernardo, Luz & Daniel Tan, Yolanda & Armando, Ezpeleta, Cynthia & Cris de Leon, Ronnie, Papio & Dina de Dios, Charito & Ricardo Mabanta, Recto & Cathy de Dios**; grandchildren **Robbie, Omar Jr., Jet, Bryan, Karen, Karlo, Klaudette, Carla, Patricia, Celine, Monina, Darren, Deuzette, Danzel, Paolo, Lara, Sabrina, Sarah, Kyla, Toby.**

His body lies in state at 44 Paraiso Street, Parang, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 24, 2002 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 1:00 PM Mass.

BRIG. GEN. ANTONIO RIVA ROMERO

(Formerly Commanding General,
3rd Military Area Camp Lapu-lapu Cebu, PMA CL41)

Peacefully joined his Creator
on March 19, 2002 at the age of 84.

His wife **SOL** (†); loving children & in-laws **Rey** (†) **& Arlyn, Baby & Emilio** (†), **Carol & Arlo Arboleda, Toots & PN Capt George Uy, Col. Antonio II & Bechie, Marilu, Antonio III & Belinda, RG & Myrgil**; brothers and sisters; grandchildren and great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Jusmag Chapel, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

Interment will be on March 24, 2002 at 12:00 noon, Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

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and I will give you rest."
MATTHEW 11:28

Our Beloved

RUBEN GOSECO CABRERA, SR.

of Guagua, Pampanga

Peacefully joined his Creator and Mama Mary
on March 20, 2002 at the age of 73.

His bereaved wife **Leonora de Vera**; children **Norma, Lingling** and **Gil Pamandanan, Ruben** (**Bitoy**) **Jr.** and **Luz Razon, Tess** and **Arnold Aquino, Lulu** and **Edgar Sundiam, Dennis** and **Anette Ocampo**; grandchildren **Maan** and **Carlo Pamandanan; Thirdy, Con-Con, Tin-Tin Cabrera; Nico** and **Arjo Aquino, Sam-Sam** and **Nicabel Sundiam; Frances, Maegan, Matthew Cabrera**; brothers and sisters, in-laws, aunties, cousins, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the LM Subdivision Chapel in Sta. Filomena, Guagua, Pampanga.

Interment will be at the Eternal Memorial Park in Guagua, Pampanga on March 24, 2002 (Sunday) after the 2:00 o'clock Mass at the Immaculate Conception Parish Church (Guagua).

Our Beloved Mama

CONCHA ALEJANDRINO EVANGELISTA

(of Arayat, Pampanga and Antipolo City)

Peacefully joined her Creator on March 19, 2002
at the age of 92.

She is survived by her loving children **Roberto** (†) and **Trinidad Paz, Mely** and **Sonny Pastor, Peping** and **Emy San Gabriel, Linda** and **Alex Ampil** (†), **Luchie** and **Gerry Lopez** and **Eddie**; her grandchildren and great grandchildren request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Sacred Heart Chapel, Beverly Hills, Antipolo City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 24, 2002 at the Loyola Memorial Chapel Park, Marikina City, immediately after the 8:00 AM Mass.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give thee my heart and my soul."

AGUSTINA PARUÑGAO DE GUZMAN, M.D.

of Gapan, Nueva Ecija
UP College of Medicine, Class 1937

Claimed the Lord's promise of eternal life,
and joined her husband Tomas and son Boy on March 20, 2002.

Her bereaved children, **Tessie** and **Teddy Castro, Pining de Guzman, Peter** and **Tess de Guzman, Consy** and **Rene Montemayor, Boy** (†) and **Lucille de Guzman, Vicky** and **June Chua, Cora** and **Bert Navarro**; grandchildren **Tina, Jon & Meris, Dennis & Gia, Thirdy, Caloy, Grace, Kenneth, Mitzi, Kristine, Luchi** and **Vince**; great grandchildren **Miggy** and **Paolo**; brother and sisters, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (Claret), UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City.

Interment at the Holy Cross Memorial Park will be on Sunday, March 24, 2002 after the 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass.

Atty. CELEDONIO E. TIONGSON

(Former Dean, College of Law, University of the East)

Has peacefully joined our Lord
on March 20, 2002 at the age of 79.

His loving wife **Angelina**; children **Didi** and **Nick Garcia, Mila** and **Roland** (†) **Aguila, Grace** and **Tito Enriquez, Cielo** and **Toti Quinio, Ditas** and **Chito Ocampo, Boy** and **Susan Tiongson, Butch** and **Lilian Tiongson, Raul Tiongson,** and **Lito** and **Peachy Tiongson**; his grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request for your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul and for his eternal happiness.

His remains lie in state at the Sanctuario de San Jose in Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City.

His remains will be cremated at a date to be announced later.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
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Commemorating Emilio Aguinaldo's
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Eduardo Faustino Gonzalez y Salgado

February 15, 1930 - March 20, 2002

peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 72.

We, his family, wife **Magdalena Borromeo Gonzalez**; children **Leo** and **Nannette Dacera**, **Dody** and **Josie Gonzalez**, **Rico** and **Mel Gonzalez**, and **Deedee**; grandchildren **Denise**, **Jemo**, **Joaquin**, **Prisa** and **Havey**; brothers and sisters request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body now lies in state at Saint Alphonsus de Liguori Chapels, Magallanes, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 24, 2002 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 1:00 PM Mass.

MERCEDES L. LACSON

Peacefully joined her Creator on March 3, 2002 at the age of 80.

She is survived by her loving children and their spouses **Fidel** and **Sally**, **Lina** and **Pat**, **Letty**, **Bong** and **Hermie**; and her grandchildren **Chris**, **Stanniel**, **Shiela**, **Sally**, **Ayette**, **Harry** and **Harvey**.

Her ashes is at Christ the King, Green Meadows, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass shall be held on March 23, 2002 at 9:30 at the Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Please pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

DR. EPHRAIM SANCHEZ MORAL

Husband of **Dra. Andrea Naguiat Moral** (deceased)

of Porac, Pampanga and residing in Daly City, California, U.S.A.
University of the Philippines, College of Medicine, Class of 1944

retired Ophthalmologist, San Miguel Corporation and Development Bank of the Philippines

Passed away on March 8, 2002 at the age of 81 in Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A.

He is survived by his loving children and their spouses **Joel**, **Rene**, **Raul** (**Rolly**), **Alex** and **Laura**, **Nora** and **Pom**; and his grandchildren **J. Margaret**, **J. Alec**, **J. Michael**, **Vincent Brian**, **Angel Andrea**, **Christina** (**Chrissie**), **Francesca** (**Chesi**), **Brent Michael**, **Colin Alexander**, **Ethan Andrew**, and **Matthew**.

His remains will lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapel in Marikina City on March 21 & 22, 2002 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Midnight.

Interment will be on March 23, 2002 at 3:00 p.m. at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

Please pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

NORMA BELLEZA PARLADE

Peacefully joined her Creator on March 17, 2002.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 24, 2002, Sunday, 9:00 a.m. La Loma Cemetery, Quezon City.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

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DEL MONTE Pineapple Juice 240 mL. x 6 VAT INCLUSIVE **P72** per pack **P12** per 240 mL.

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ALASKA Condensed Milk 300 mL. x 12 VAT INCLUSIVE **P309** per pack **P25.75** per can

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BUSINESS*Friday*

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Beer and ad agency's 16-year marriage stays

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

IT WAS a marriage that lasted 16 years and was momentarily threatened when one of the parties' eyes strayed.

But after looking at three other very good prospective partners, the party who nearly strayed decided its old spouse was still the best after all.

McCann Erickson Phils. Inc. won the P400-million San Miguel beer advertising account. The win will likely seal McCann's position as the No. 1 ad agency in the country in terms of billings (amount of ads placed in various media outlets) this year.

The bid also means income of at least P75 million in the ad agency's coffers.

The advertising industry thought it was the end of the 16-year marriage of McCann and San Miguel beer when San Miguel Corp. asked other agencies to pitch for the account—Jimenez and Partners, Saatchi & Saatchi, Lowe and Partners (Lintas) and FCB. But it was not.

"I don't think leaving McCann was the motivation for their opening the bid. The client wants to know what's happening out there," McCann chair Emily A. Abrera says in an interview.

She was also happy because "SMC's move gave us a chance to prove that we have the best people" in the industry.

McCann created some memorable ads for San Miguel like the Fernando Poe series, "Kahit Kailan Kaibigan," "Sabado Nights," "5-thirsty" and also created huge market share for Sprite with its "Magpakatotoo Ka" series.

SMC gave the four advertising agencies 27 days to draw up a new campaign for San Miguel beer.

A core group from each of the invited ad agencies focused all their efforts and talents for almost a month on drawing up the winning ad that would bring in the plum account.

Everybody thought they had a winner but in the end only one was chosen.

Abrera says she knew the agency struck gold in their campaign because of the "new truth" they uncovered about the brand.

"I felt we had a winner because I felt very strongly we had reached a new truth (about San Miguel)," she says.

What McCann did was pool about 45 people from a cross section of the ad agency—mostly people who had never worked for the beer account.

"We tried to do a fusion of all possible catalysts. We got together people who knew the relations of people to media. We looked at how consumers react to media," she says.

She adds that they got together people who were immersed in the pop culture and in the needs of the consumers.

TEAM McCann group picture during its post-presentation celebrations. Inset shows Emily Abrera

"Our campaign was rooted on a truth about the brand," Abrera states.

She says the hardest part was going after that truth or "insight" about the brand as some agencies would call it.

"You cannot deviate from the brand. Once you understood the drinkers, the rest will be executional," she explains.

She of course declines to reveal what exactly is the "truth" that they stumbled as this would preempt the campaign.

But she goes as far as saying some of the country's best talents were tapped for insights on beer and beer drinking. These include director Joey Reyes and actor/director Johnny Delgado.

The creative work, however, was all McCann's and Emily, a major creative talent, was involved in the process.

Abrera says she did not feel McCann had lost the account when SMC opened up the bid but she admits there were moments when she felt they would lose it.

"But overall I continued to have great faith in the review process of the client. I felt very strongly more than at any other time that we would get a fair share," she states.

The challenge McCann now faces is to increase beer consumption. Beer drinkers have been on the decline, not just in the Philippines, but worldwide.

Abrera says this was because people today have more choices.

San Miguel is looking for marketing and advertising ideas to increase drinker base, strengthen loyalty and improve drinking frequency.

Beer drinkers range from teeners to senior citizens and this totals about 46 million of the 80 million local population.

To Emily, the other major challenge in marketing the 111-year-old beer which is as Abrera puts it "probably the greatest brand the Philippines ever had, is to communicate the power and the strength of the brand."

"It is an icon and one of the symbols of the Philippines and has not changed in its excellence," she stresses.

The intense process of drawing up a new campaign for the beer gave Abrera a different view of the brand.

"Working intensely for four weeks allowed me to look at the brand in a different way. It was a tremendous effort," she says.

In the end, it was that view and the view of the rest of her group that McCann Erickson Philippines retain its business and creative partnership with San Miguel that has made it possible to last much longer than some real marriages.

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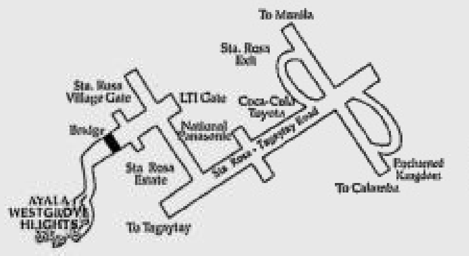

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VAT and sales

TAX-FILES

By Rodell A. Molina
SGV and Co.

THE TAX Code of 1997 imposes a value-added tax (VAT) on the sale, barter, exchange, lease of goods or properties, rendition of services and importation of goods in the course of trade or business.

For a transaction to be subject to VAT, therefore, it is essential that: (a) there must be a sale, barter, exchange, lease of goods or properties, rendition of services or importation of goods; and (b) the sale, barter, exchange, etc. must be in the course of trade or business.

Sales of goods or properties not held for sale to customers or held for lease in the ordinary course of trade or business are not subject to VAT.

Thus, the Bureau of Internal Revenue ruled that the sale by a corporation, which is not engaged in the buying and selling of real property, of a land that was never used in business is not subject to VAT.

The BIR added that the sale of real properties classified as capital assets sold by ordinary property owners to Filipino-Americans are not subject to VAT.

Transaction deemed sale

There are, however, instances under the Tax Code of 1997, where a transaction is still subject to VAT although the sale, barter, exchange, etc. of goods or properties is not in the course of trade or business.

These instances are found in Section 106(B) of the Tax Code of 1997 which is aptly titled "transactions deemed sale."

Section 106(B) of the NIRC of 1997 provides as follows:

"SEC. 106. Value-Added Tax on Sale of Goods or Properties.

(B) Transactions Deemed Sale. The following transactions shall be deemed sale:

Transfer, use or consumption not in the course of business of goods or properties originally intended for sale or for use in the course of business;

(2) Distribution or transfer to:

(a) Shareholders or investors as share in the profits of the VAT-registered persons; or

(b) Creditors in payment of debt;

(3) Consignment of goods if actual sale is not made within 60 days following the dates such goods were consigned; and

(4) Retirement from or cessation of business, with respect to inventories of taxable goods existing as of such retirement or cessation.

In defining what constitutes "transfer, use or consumption not in the course of business of goods originally intended for sale or for use in the course of business," Revenue Regulations No. 7-95 (Consolidated VAT Regulations), as amended, provides as follows:

"Transfer of goods or properties not in the course of business can take place when the VAT-registered person withdraws goods from his business for his personal use."

Is the definition in Revenue Regulation No. 7-95 restrictive or merely illustrative?

A recent ruling of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) would seem to indicate that definition was merely illustrative and not restrictive.

In BIR Ruling 057-99 dated April 27, 1999, the BIR ruled that the sale by FUFC of all its machinery to its parent company Nikon is subject to the 10-percent VAT imposed under Section 106(A) of the Tax Code of 1997.

If the BIR considers the definition restrictive, it would have ruled otherwise since the sale by FUFC of all its machinery to its parent company does not constitute withdrawal of goods or properties by a VAT-registered person from his business for personal use.

On the other hand, the decision of the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) in the case of Magsaysay Lines Inc. vs. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, CTA Case No. 4353, April 27, 1992 would seem to indicate that the CTA considers the definition restrictive.

The case involved the sale by the National Development Company (NDC) of five NDC-owned vessels in line with the privatization efforts of the government.

The commissioner of Internal Revenue contended that sale was a "transaction deemed sale." The CTA did not agree.

According to the CTA, the circumstances surrounding the sale of the five vessels did not fall under any of the transactions deemed sale under the Tax Code and the regulations.

The CTA added that if there was any doubt regarding the issue, it should be resolved in favor of the taxpayer.

Although initially, the decision of the CTA in the case of Magsaysay Lines Inc. vs. commissioner of Internal Revenue, supra., was reversed and set aside by the Court of Appeals (CA) in the case of commissioner of Internal Revenue vs. Court of Tax Appeals, Magsaysay Lines Inc., et al., CA-G.R. SP No. 29994, March 11, 1997, the CA subsequently reversed itself in a resolution dated Feb. 5, 2001 (CA-G.R. SP No. 2994) granting the motion for reconsideration filed by Magsaysay Lines Inc.

In the resolution, the CA affirmed the decision of the CTA in toto.

This resolution of the Court of Appeals was appealed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue to the Supreme Court and is now pending. It is interesting to find out how the Supreme Court will rule on this case.

The ruling of the Supreme Court will finally settle the issue on whether the definition of Revenue Regulations No. 7-95 on "transactions deemed sale" is restrictive or merely illustrative.

Aroma of Asian specialty coffees set to spread

SINGAPORE—Ever sipped some Sumatra Mandheling, Indian Mysore, Tiger Mountain or Sulawesi Kallosi?

No? These are some of Asia's top grade coffees already served in specialty coffee shops around the world but yet to establish the reputation they deserve, industry officials and traders say.

Asia has more to offer the world's café society than robusta from Vietnam, which is mass-produced and often used for manufacturing powdered coffee, industry chiefs declared when they gathered in Singapore for a conference earlier this month.

And despite the region's tea drinking tradition, coffee consumption in Asia is expected to grow faster than almost anywhere else over the next five years, they said

"For coffee, Asia is now the happening place," said Paul Monk, managing director of Bero Coffee Singapore Pte. Ltd., Asian arm of the world's largest coffee trader, Neumann Kaffee Gruppe based in Germany.

Asia has boosted its share of the world's coffee output to a quarter from about 10 percent 20 years ago, eating into the share of Africa, the birthplace of the commodity, he said.

And as output rose, so has Asian coffee demand—climbing to 840,000 tons in 2001 from below 480,000 in 1985. The region should see an annual growth of close to 3 percent until 2005, compared with projected growth of 0.5 percent in North America and one percent for Western Europe, Monk said.

Industry experts believe Asian consumption holds the key to international coffee prices, currently hovering just above 30-year lows under the weight of a huge overhang in supply.

Japan dominant

The dominant Asian coffee market is also the region's dominant economy—Japan.

The Japanese drank the equivalent of 421,309 tons of green unroasted coffee last year, comprising more than a half of total Asian demand and making them the world's third largest coffee consumer after the United States and Germany.

Demand has hit record highs for three consecutive years, despite the economic malaise plaguing the country since the early 1990s—although more coffee is being brewed at home as the recession bites.

Consumption is still growing, said Makoto Tsujimoto, executive at one of the country's major roasters, UCC Ueshima Coffee Co Ltd. He projects growth of 3 to 4 percent this year, helped by rapid expansion in trendy self-service coffee bars outside major cities.

A coffee cultural revolution is also underway in the world's largest tea producer, India, which has a large middle-class among its 1 billion plus population.

Coffee bars are sprouting, adding ambience and variety to traditional shops and attracting a younger crowd, said Sunalini Menon, chief executive of Coffee Lab Pte. Ltd. from Bangalore in southern India.

Asia a coffee source

With its history of growing quality tea, India also has a big future in the world of specialty coffee, along with countries like Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and China.

"India is tremendously underrated for the quality it produces . . . The problem with a lot of very good Asian good coffees are their poor distribution," Alan Frew from Australia, who picks quality beans for the country's roasters, said.

"Coffee is, in many respects, like wine. Certain origins, certain growth, certain farms, get the reputation for quality. They can take the reputation and leverage it into higher reputation and higher demand," he told Reuters.

Traders and industry officials said unlike some Arabic grades from Central America, such as Jamaican Blue Mountain, Asian coffee gems are blended away.

Yet things are changing, they said, with some gourmet retailers, such as Starbucks Corp., turning increasingly to Asian origin beans—and also to Asian marketplaces.

Frew is currently promoting Chinese arabica from Yunnan province, which he said tasted almost like apples—low in acidity, but distinctive, beautiful and smooth.

Steen Londal, business manager in Malaysia for Denmark's Danisco Cultor, is confident that flavored coffees will help attract more Asians who are currently not coffee drinkers.

In the United States, the world's top coffee consumer, flavored coffees with fragrance of vanilla, chocolate or hazelnut, account for as much as 30 percent of its specialty coffee market or 4 to 5 percent of the total consumption, he said.

"It masks the bitter taste of coffee," he said. "People who don't like coffee will drink flavored coffees."

Reuters

A foreign MBA can give Pinoys a big lift

THE BASIC BA just won't cut it any more for most multinationals, large domestic firms and global institutions. Any MBA gives that man or woman a significant leg-up, but with an MBA from abroad, Pinoys get an equal opportunity for those lucrative and mind-expanding international jobs.

Need proof? Consider that since 1980, 34 students from the Philippines have graduated from the MBA program at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School, one of Europe's Top 10 business schools.

Among them: Roger S. Chua, COO of Cetelem Bank Taiwan, the fully owned consumer bank of BNP Paribas, the No. 1 bank in France and president of the VLGMS alumni association and the only Asian on the VLGMS International Advisory Board; Bing de Guzman, head of private banking in Asia for ING Barings in Hong Kong; and, Marivic Alora, Asian director of human resources for Canada's Northern Telecom in Hong Kong.

"When you hold an MBA, you increase your market value," says Peter Rafferty of VLGMS. "The MBA is the only globally recognized management qualification. An accredited degree will carry significant value in any organization's hiring and career advancement decisions."

He also notes a "direct correlation" between furthering your education and higher salaries.

There are MBA programs closer to home, of course. But enrolling at a school abroad brings the priceless advantages of exposure to new cultures and customs and different business practices and laws.

"Spending a year at a European business school can open the doors to working in Europe. You will have direct access to the recruiters and you will be able to become a member of a global network," Rafferty said.

"There is much greater diversity in continental European business schools than there is in the United States and United Kingdom. In US MBA programs, internationalization actually means integration. The focus is on how the United States does business with other countries. In business schools outside the United States, you get a feel for how business is conducted around the world and the focus will be on leveraging the value of diversity."

Belgium is strategically located at the crossroads of Western Europe, home to over 1,400 international non-government organizations and multinationals.

Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School has accreditation from both AMBA (Association of MBAs) and Equis (European Quality Improvement System). It is associated with the University of Gent and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, both world-renowned faculties.

"Because it builds a bridge between the academic and the business world, VLGMS can offer its students outstanding resources and provide access to both academic and industry leaders," Rafferty says. "Up-to-date theoretical insights are combined with practical experience in order to prepare young executives for a successful management career."

Teamwork is the key and classes are limited to 65 students, allowing better interaction among students from a wide variety of educational and professional backgrounds.

During the third trimester, the school offers specific elective modules concentrating on doing global business and entrepreneurship to prepare students for the rapidly changing business environment.

While total tuition for the one-year fulsome MBA program is about P556,000 (12,373 euro), the student pays only P331,000 of this. The rest is derived by the school from the consultancy project that students complete during the third trimester. The tuition includes the cost of manuals, course materials, use of computers, accommodation for residential seminars in Belgium, transport for company visits and related items. Total living cost is P269,820 (6,000 euro) for one year.

Several scholarships are available covering all course expenses. Last year, 20 percent of flextime MBA students received a scholarship.

To apply for a scholarship, candidates must submit an essay of 350 to 500 words on the topic: "Describe your motivation for wanting to acquire an international management education." Applications are judged on the applicants understanding of management education, the need to understand cultural differences in business, the potential impact of a management education on their career prospects and communication style.

Applications for the current year must be submitted by March 31. Applications can be sent to Peter Rafferty, Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School, Bellevue 6, 9050 Gent, Belgium.

Interested applicants may also contact Gerry Ducduc in Manila at 414-6241/45 or by e-mail to Ed Canlas, incoming president (arcanlas@skyinet.net) of VLGMS Alumni Association.

Applicants must show a solid academic record at university level and promising GMAT score, along with a letter of motivation, excellent professional history with at least three years of business-related experience, two reference letters, completed application form and payment of the application fee of 50 euro (P2,248.50).

Applicants deemed strong candidates will be invited to attend a selection interview with a member of the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School or the alumni association.

"The MBA program, our internationally recognized faculty, the international background of fellow students, international internship/project possibilities and the schools job placement initiatives provide the knowledge and the skills that our students need in order to embark on a successful international business career," Rafferty notes.

"In addition, the partnership of the school with the business community and the network of successful alumni working around the world can help open many doors for our graduates. At this moment, there are over 2,500 graduates in more than 70 countries, so as a student you have access to a ready-made global network."

Simple tax collection scheme can improve BIR's image

By Kathy Peneyra

La-di-da . . . Music swells across the neighborhood, as children rush out of their houses with their pockets bursting with money. Aha! The ice cream man is coming. Indeed, an ice cream cart pulls up just around the corner, playing a familiar music jingle, and attracting customers in the process.

The measure of a local company's success in introducing ice cream carts equipped with speakers playing a fancy tune lies not only in boosting sales or its improving market share, but also in the sheer volume of its patrons.

This ice cream-maker is bringing its product closer to its customers, and is reaping the rewards for it.

Accessibility is the name of the game. A product or service will sell if it comes at little or no extra cost to its consumers. The added convenience of not having to go very far to try out a service encourages people to patronize the most accessible merchant.

No need to queue up for long periods of time just to face a cashier who knows next to nothing about what he is selling.

When it comes to a citizens' obligation, as in paying their taxes, accessibility promotes compliance. The nature of our tax system relies on voluntary compliance, which can be greatly increased if accessibility to the system is facilitated.

Taxpayers are more likely to pay the right taxes on time if the processes of getting information and filing tax returns are convenient. A less taxing tax system and bureaucracy encourage the citizens to fulfill their responsibilities as members of the community.

In Mexico, the tax administration bureau has introduced roving vans designed to facilitate tax collection. These mobile units provide assistance to individual taxpayers by distributing and collecting tax forms, as well as educating the people about their tax policy.

By going into the communities, the taxman directly interacts with its customers, belaying the long-standing notion that citizens should be made to endure the bureaucratic red tape in order to speedily process his transactions.

Having such a simple and trouble-free system of tax collection is hoped to improve the public image of the tax administration and instill a culture of voluntary compliance among its taxpayers.

This form of taxpayer service persuades the taxpayers to act in accordance with what the law prescribes. Taxpayers do not have to think twice about filing tax returns because the tax administrator approaches them to explain how to compute the right amount of tax payable and to expedite processing of their returns.

The Mexico approach is a cost-effective way of increasing the rate of tax collection.

In a similar way, filing tax returns in the Philippines is not as difficult as it is thought to be.

Taxpayers may be able to make payments to the Bureau of Internal Revenue through its affiliate banks. This method of payment is especially accessible to businesses, commonly located in commercial districts where bank branches can be found within office buildings or right around the corner, easily within reach.

Because of this convenience, tax payments made through the banks are now part of routine business transactions, therefore decreasing the incidence of late payments or even tax evasion.

The idea of letting the taxman come to the taxpayer is nothing new. The adoption of more efficient ways of collecting taxes has been mired by a bloated bureaucracy and the lack of political will from our leaders to change the system that has not been working properly.

For the tax administration to achieve, or even exceed its revenue targets, it must work on increasing accessibility of individual taxpayers to the system. It must reinvent its philosophy and treat taxpayers as customers, and make adjustments to their processes as such.

By improving tax collection, the government will be in the position to eliminate our budget deficit, adequately fund its projects and services and even broaden the range of its programs.

By increasing revenues, the government will have the necessary resources to alleviate poverty. Reforming the tax system will be an important step toward improving our quality of life and our overall economic development. As taxpayers, we must push for tax administration reform.

Insurance firm goes network marketing on the Internet

By Clarissa S. Batino

IF ALMOST all commodities are now traded in the Internet, surely, insurance plans should be one of them.

Monarch Insurance Co. Inc., a 37-year-old non-life insurance firm with Malaysian and Singaporean partners, had launched in late November a web-based venture called B-Sure.

The insurance company has started to use the world-wide web as the main channel for all its operations related to marketing, including promotion and sales.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Tomas Lopez, chair of Monarch and a marketing professor and chair emeritus at the Asian Institute of Management, attests that B-Sure has put together a winning marketing formula that no insurance company had ever done.

Using the power of the Internet through the websites of Pinoymail.com and Yehey.com as well as the best in network marketing, B-Sure should be a force to reckon with in the coming months, according to Lopez who received the Agora Award for achievement in marketing education last year.

Monarch offers accident and health insurance packages to Internet users for only P600 each. Through multilevel marketing, a plan holder could earn as much as P9.8 million by inviting other meaningful clients for Monarch.

Network or multilevel marketing is, of course, a positive term for the dreaded pyramiding scheme that had given what experts believe to be a legitimate tool a bad name.

But unlike other companies that have failed in efficiently using multilevel marketing, B-Sure would not succumb to the downfall, assures the AIM professor.

"Network marketing is legitimate when it derives its competition from the sale of products and not by registration fees," said Lopez. The professor was instrumental in starting one of the country's first multilevel marketing firms, the Good Housekeeping.

What should make the B-Sure venture successful, said the AIM professor, is that the underlying product itself, which is a health and accident insurance, is one that a prospective agent can use.

This, unlike other products sold through the pyramid scheme that have no value for the sales agent, he notes.

Y.C. Lai, senior vice president of Monarch, points out that all the activities of B-Sure—from marketing, documentation, underwriting, processing, accounting and communication—are all web-based.

This translates to almost zero cost in marketing and administration that usually eat up as much as 70 percent of other insurance premiums.

"These huge savings are given back to the plan subscribers as an incentive to convert them into marketing agents for the company," says Lai.

Monarch's P600 annual health and accident insurance provides a P550,000 benefit.

"We offer a very affordable insurance protection that gives a plan holder a potential source of income," says Lopez.

An opportunistic plan holder, he said, could go a step further by joining a growing pool of sales agent by simply providing B-Sure an e-mail list of potential clients.

The agent would get P20 for each prospect that bought the plan and from each referral down the lineup to the eighth level.

One who could complete a "perfect pyramid" could earn as much as P9.8 million but even without a prefect progression, the potential earnings for an agent would be enormous, explains Lai.

The earnings from the pyramid, she adds, could be considered as one that recurs yearly because one satisfied with the product of Monarch is expected to get the insurance each year.

The insurance firm had already forged meaningful partnerships with Pinoymail and Yehey whose subscribers would provide Monarch with a huge jump-off point. Pinoymail, for instance, has about 800,000 subscribers and boasts of 8,000 hits a day.

B-Sure also maintains a website where other clients could log on to in order to buy the health and accident insurance and to join the pyramid, said Lai.

Network marketing, said Lopez, is ideal for financial products because growth would be unlimited. And doing one in the Internet is even better, according to the AIM professor.

Outdoor ads reel sales in

By Nenet Galang-Pereña

THE BIG city is notorious for its traffic clogged thoroughfares, smog blanketed skies and shabbily clad sidewalks. Everyday, the tired and sullen commuters have to endure stretches of hostile roads drowning in the din and languishing in the dim of urban decay.

But somewhere in the horizon, as if a mirage in the middle of a relentless dessert, looms the faces of popular stars.

There is Sharon Cuneta (photographed from her favorite angle), enticing one to drink her favorite milk; Aga Muhlach (primed up with his killer dimples), tempting us to take a bite of his crispy chicken; and Cesar Montano (precariously poised on a bike), luring us to the thrill of the sporty life with his underfashion ken.

Advertising billboards with celebrity models (movies, TV, recording and sports) have proliferated as the deus ex machina of the urban jungle.

Main thoroughfares such as Edsa, North & South Expressways, Quezon Avenue, Shaw Boulevard, and Aurora Boulevard in Metro Manila are favorite spots for billboards, although key cities like Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod and Ilollo boast of their own monoliths in steel.

Flaunting their "stars in the sky," this outdoor advertising medium says that a product or service has arrived.

Why billboards?

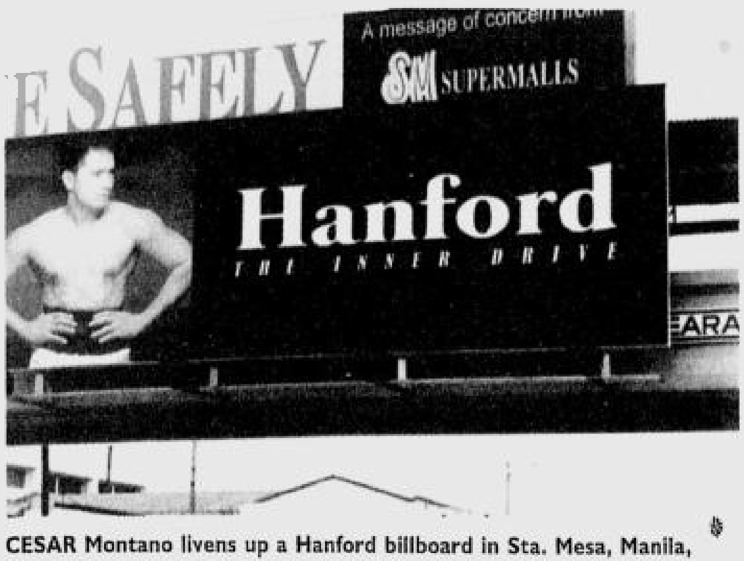
Lovelle Sy, marketing manager of Mansfield International Inc., maker of Hanford and Hartmann underfashion, sees billboards as effective advertising tools, especially for the undergarments industry.

"They enable us to showcase our products and entice viewers to buy our latest lines even while they are on the road," she explains.

These billboards are also cost effective, particularly for small- and medium-size business which can not afford the enormous budget for television spots that sometimes reach the hundred millions mark.

Mansfield has been utilizing outdoor ads since 1980. It's maiden billboard stood along E. Rodriguez Avenue, near Araneta Avenue in Quezon City.

Simple by today's standards, it carried the Hanford logotype, painted on GI sheet board, with goose lamps for illumination. Monthly cost was only P2,500 for the 12 x 36 billboard.



CESAR Montano livens up a Hanford billboard in Sta. Mesa, Manila, near SM Centerpoint.

Billboard technology has grown by leaps and bounds since then. New materials like tarpaulin for photoboards, in tri-vision (three faces) etc. mounted on steel structures in building, lands, walls have steadily mushroomed in the metropolis.

Manny Andaya, vice president for marketing of Erectors Inc., a veteran outdoor ad executive, with 20 years behind him in the industry, attests to the steady growth of billboards as advertising tools.

"The going rate is P50,000-P150,000 in Metro Manila and around P15,000-P30,000 in the provinces," Andaya said. The cost depends on the size (which may range from the small 16 x 48 meter to the medium 20 x 40 meters to the huge 30 x 60 meters) and the location.

"The rates skyrocketed after the Edsa Revolution," he said.

The bigger than life photographs in tarpaulin boards present imposing figures to motorists and commuters. By riding on the popularity of the star-endorsers like Sharon, Aga and Cesar, these products gain awareness with end consumers.

The positive image is etched in their minds and is hopefully translated into sales.

"Based on our experience, billboards have attained their objectives," Sy said.

They signed up celebrity endorsers for Hanford like ABS-CBN contract star Carlos Agassi; multi-awarded actor Cesar Montano; popular lead vocalist of South Border Band, Luke Mejares; MBA star player Alex Compton; and Viva's sexy actress and sultry singer Patricia Javier. Before Sunshine Cruz got married to Cesar, she was likewise a Hartmann model.

"It became imperative for us to increase allocation for outdoor advertising to showcase these stars in life situations, using the products they endorse," she added.

This year, Mansfield has doubled its billboards. Within Metro Manila, it has now around 20 sites and in the provinces, another 20. Following industry trends, it has cut television placements and has shifted to outdoor ads.

Even stars see the importance of having giant posters in the sky as an integral portion of their advertising contracts with the advertisers and their agencies.

"Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan" star Carlos Agassi relishes the fact that his larger-than-life images for Hanford are all over the metropolis and other growth centers of the archipelago.

Montano, for his part believes that his billboard agreement with Mansfield enhances his overall projection to the public.

How to Choose Billboards

There are crucial factors in choosing a particular billboard. Here are tips from Jun Perez, president of Admark Advertising Co., a known outdoor supplier.

OUTDOOR/ C7

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Coconut and oil palm, competition or complementation?

By Ramon Ma. Epino

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's recent land deal with Malaysian oil palm investors raises fear among coconut farmers that oil palm would directly compete with coconut in the Philippines. In spite of government assurance, they say there will be more pain than gain in this enterprise.

Not true! say government agriculture officials. Instead of competing with each other, the two agri enterprises will actually complement each other.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor explains, "Oil palm plantation development will—we have no doubt about it—provide farmers, investors, the agricultural community and the country more advantages than perceived economic dislocations. We are looking at complementation and diversification. We see farmers deciding on better crops to plant where they could earn regular and higher incomes."

Many voices are raised in doubt, however. Among them is that of the Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI) that opposes the establishment of oil palm plantations in Mindanao, which is near Malaysia, hence, the farms are to be sited there.

PPI executive director Romeo Royandoyan laments that "the plan promotes plantation-type agriculture that would result in the reconsolidation of large private agricultural lands. In effect, this would turn back the government's agrarian reform and agricultural modernization programs, which are supposed to spearhead the growth and productivity of small farms.

"Moreover, instead of parceling and distributing land to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), the government is stoking leaseback arrangements which run counter to the spirit and intent of agrarian reform.

For his part, Luis Lorenzo Jr., presidential adviser on job generation and concurrently chair of the Mindanao Peace and Development Council, allays the misplaced fears of the country's coconut farmers, especially those in Mindanao.

"Let us remove our misgivings. Mindanao palm oil will never replace nor displace coconut farms. On the social side, coconut helps farmers earn additional incomes as they can intercrop. Coconut plantation also allows families to build their nipa huts *(bahay-kubo)* underneath the trees. This is not possible for palm oil. On the other hand, coconut provides food for farmers—the meat and juice satisfy their needs during difficult times. Oil palm, on the other hand, is not edible except when used as cooking oil.

Industry experts estimate that in the next 10 years, demand for palm oil will rise considerably. Malaysia, the world's top producer of palm oil, is obviously looking for large farms outside its borders to expand production and satisfy world demand. The plant is suited in regions with evenly distributed rainfall and moderate climate. Hence, the ideal site is Mindanao. To this day all the 15,000 hectares of oil palm are located in Mindanao, especially the former forested areas of Agusan.

Lorenzo further explains that: "World demand for coconut oil, likewise, is also expected to expand due to the growing health consciousness of consumers in Europe and North America, where vegetable oil is preferred over animal fats. Palm oil cannot steal this market segment from us. Unlike coconut, oil palm has

COCONUT/C7

Insurer aims for top spot through creative selling

"WHAT makes us one of the best in the industry are our people. That is why we make sure that they are well equipped to be the best."

So said Thomas Flournoy, New York Life chief of international agency operations during his recent visit late last month to Manila to educate and promote the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) to its sales associates.

Flournoy's visit is part of New York Life Insurance Philippines' (NYLIP) initiative to reach its goal of being one of the top insurance companies in the country in five years. The insurance company's aim is to boost the morale and productivity of its sales force and to inspire them to excel through the promotion of the MDRT.

"The MDRT is the collection of the best of the best in the insurance business," said Flournoy. "And for more than 40 years, New York Life has been the consistent leader in its membership."

The MDRT is an international organization dedicated to fostering a high standard and professional approach to life insurance and sales service. From its beginnings in 1927 when it was formed by 32 life insurance producers in the US, each of whom sold $1 Million of life insurance that year, the MDRT today has grown into an independent association with nearly 25,000 members around the world.

Flournoy, himself a life and qualifying member of the Million Dollar Table (MDRT), and five-time qualifier of the MDRT's "Top of the Table," was brought into the country together with MDRT president Marvin Feldman to engage NYLIP's local sales force.

Flournoy stressed that NYLIP aims to be the number one in MDRT memberships here in the country, being the current No. 1 in worldwide membership with a total of 2,306 members as of 2001.

"To be member of the MDRT is one of the best things that could happen to a professional in this field. MDRT gives members benefits ranging from education and training opportunities to providing up to date information on trends and in the insurance industry," said Flournoy.

Networking and building lasting friendships with its other members is also another reward "In the insurance business," noted Flournoy, "It is important to have friends and people that you can turn to for advice and inspiration." The MDRT had 184 Filipino members as of last year.

FLOURNOY

"With proper guidance and assistance, we know Filipino in the insurance field can do this. We have a lot of faith in the capability of Filipinos."

To qualify for 2003 MDRT, members and aspiring members in the Philippines must produce at least P 1.31 million in 2002 first year commissions paid on P 2,61 million paid first year premium earned during 2002. Another requirement would be membership in the local Life Underwriters Association (LUA).

"Reaching the MDRT is not an easy thing to do. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication' not only to get there but also to stay there," he said. "That is why we want to help people here in the Philippines reach their full potential. By giving them the proper motivation and guidance through the promotion of MDRT and its values."

Opportunities in the Philippines

One of the opportunities that Filipino insurance agents can capitalize on, according to Flournoy, is the Filipino's family orientation.

"Filipinos have strong family ties and often live together in extended families. There's an opportunity waiting right there," explained Flournoy. "In fact, one of our most successful agents in the States is a Filipina, and she serves the Filipino community in the bay Area. And for her efforts, entire families have been insured," the insurance executive noted.

"The market is very conducive for Filipinos to excel in this field, and given the proper motivation and tools, we believe that the Philippines can be among the top countries with membership in the MDRT."

Promoting the MDRT among its sales force is only one of the programs that NYLIP is doing in order to serve its clients further. NYLIP recently sealed a marketing agreement with CAP Life of the CAP Family Of Companies, which they announced last Feb. 20-22 at CAP's sales rally in Davao City.

Called CAP 911, the product is mainly a personal accident insurance with life insurance, dread disease and hospital stay components incorporated into it.

In for the long haul

"We are here in the Philippines for the long haul," assured Flournoy.

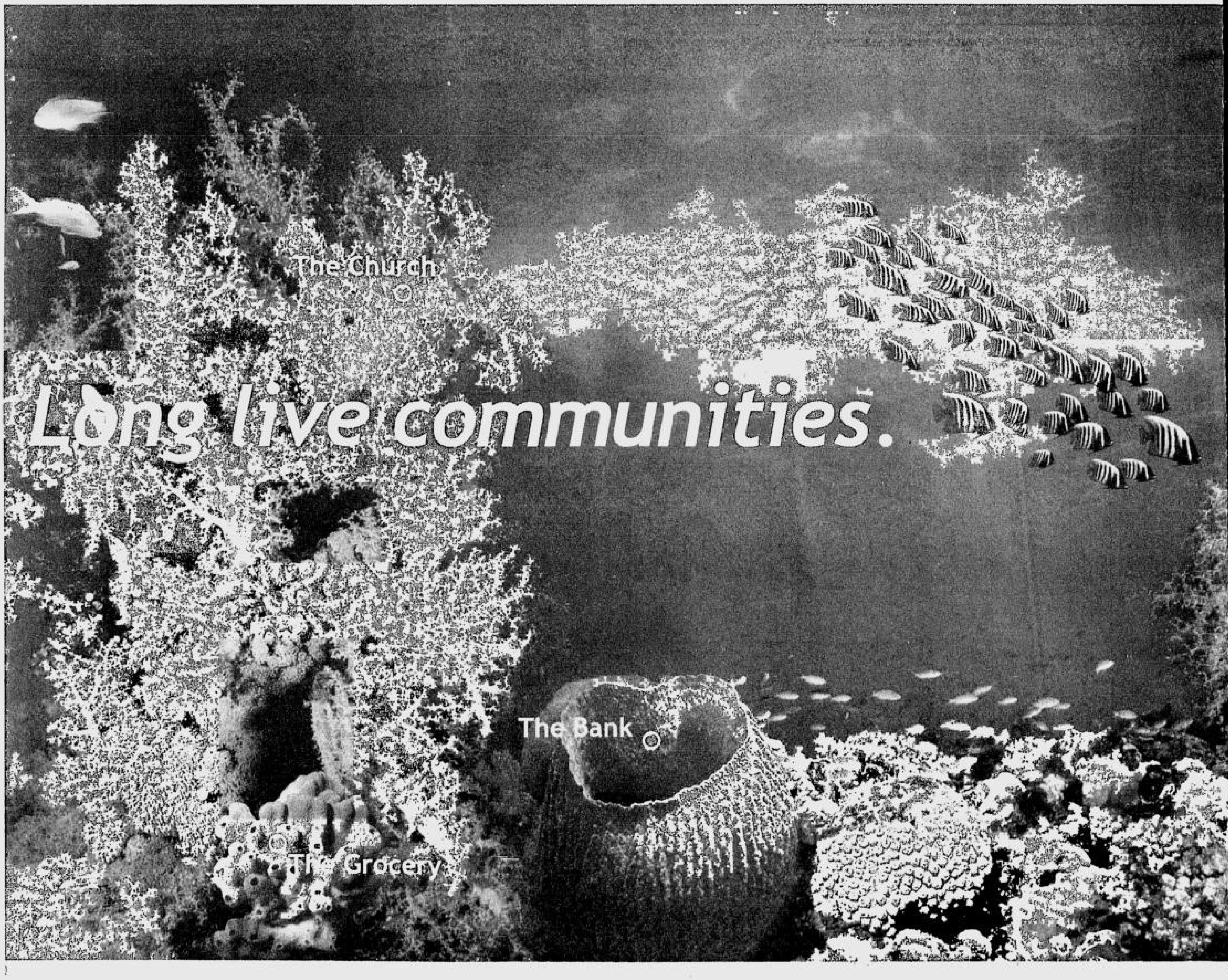
Despite the current slump, Mr. Flournoy said he has faith in the viability of the Philippine insurance market.

Flournoy reiterated that for a new company, plans of quick profits should not be the immediate agenda. Rather, the company must aim to first develop its presence and establish its position in the coming years.

"Our immediate concern is not profits. Our immediate concern is for us to reach our goals to develop the insurance industry here, then the profits will come on their own."

One of the advantages that New York Life has, said Flournoy is that it is not a publicly listed company. This allows NYLIP to plan long term without fear of investor sentiments.

"We would not have invested heavily in developing our presence here in the Philippines if we didn't believe in the country. There is much potential here, especially with our people. And with the right guidance and assistance, that potential can be realized," Flournoy said.



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RP wins first gold in Asia-Pacific ad awards

By Roger Pe

SAATCHI and Saatchi Hong Kong, Dentsu Tokyo and BBDO Bangkok shone the brightest at the 5th annual Asia-Pacific Advertising Festivals held in Thailand's famous resort city of Pattaya last March 14 to 16, 2002. All three bagged the lion's share of 11 gold, 29 silver and 52 bronze awards that went up for grabs.

But it was the Philippine entry—McDonald's "Lolo" by Leo Burnett which stole the thunder from the big boys.

A big winner in Creative Guild's November-December 2001 Ad of the Month competition, Leo Burnett's tour de force TV ad, dominated the fast-food outlet, restaurant and retail store category with a big bite at the gold, relegating Lowe Singapore's Ikea "Dog" for silver, and Dentsu Young & Rubicam Thailand's MK Restaurant "Jacuzzi" and Ogilvy & Mather's Pizza Hut "Sneeze Symphony" as just finalists.

You all know the story about McDonald's "Lolo." The grandfather kept calling his teen granddaughter Karen as another granddaughter Gina. Karen gets irked but breaks into a smile when her grandfather cuts his burger in half and says the other half is for his favorite apo, Karen.

Amid its simplicity, Leo Burnett's television ad is an emotional powder keg. You hear minimal dialogue but feel the powerful acting brought to the fore. You witness a lighting technique, as natural as in a McDonald's store, where day-to-day real drama from real people spin and unfold.

And you also see controlled and beautiful direction—all ingredients of a commercially and critically winning ad.

The Philippines' first gold in the Asia Adfest was conceived by Richard Irvine, executive creative director; Edsel Tolentino, group creative director; Sheila de la Cuesta, associate creative director/copywriter; Mike de la Cuesta, Joel Eudela and Elvin Julian III, art directors; Irene Chingcuangco, producer; Larry Manda, cinematographer; Thierry Knotz, director, and Provill, Production House.

Leo Burnett's other big win was a bronze for its Bengay "Japanese" TV ad, the only entry which produced a medal in the pharmaceutical category.

BBDO-Guerrero/Ortega's multimillion budgeted epic for Visa "Dining Out" pocketed a bronze along with Ogilvy & Mather for The Economist "Blade" outdoor advertising. All told, it was the finest showing of the Philippines in Asia Adfest, billed by the organizers as the Cannes of Asia.

Other Philippine finalists were BBDO-Guerrero's Adidas "Fence" and "Construction" and O&M's Nagaraya "Dentures" and The Economist "Middle Ground."

In TV, Dentsu picked up the Best of Show for the third year in a row with their cinematically wonderful "Whale" for the Japan Ad Council.

BBDO Bangkok predictably won the print Best of Show for its highly awarded FedEx "Box" poster. It is already Asia's most awarded ad in recent years, with the Philippines' David Guerrero as one of it authors.

Saatchi & Saatchi Hong Kong picked up the most awards with 13, including one gold, four silvers and six bronzes. It won a gold for AXA "Donkey" which also picked up the best editing craft. Its other big performer was the Campaign Brief Asia print campaign which snared two silvers, one bronze and another major craft award—best photography.

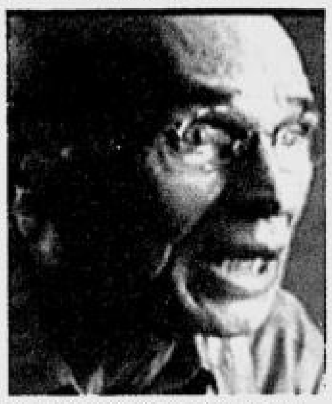
There were three gold winners in print—FedEx "Box" by BBDO Bangkok, Kit Kat "Blank Page" by Lowe Bangkok and Bentley Arnage by TBWA Hong Kong.

In film, the eight gold winners aside from McDonald's "Lolo" were Heineken "Hong Kong Rugby 7's" by Bates Hong Kong, Bright Dairy "Football" by D'Arcy Shanghai, AXA Insurance "Donkey" by Saatchi Hong Kong, SF Cinema "Feeling" by TBWA Thailand, Japan Ad Council "Whale" by Dentsu Tokyo, Select Tuna "Walking" by DY&R Bangkok and National Energy Police Office "Land of Smiles" by Saatchi Bangkok.

In network rankings, Saatchi & Saatchi were clear winners with 25 awards to O&M's 15, Dentsu with 13, BBDO with 10 and Leo Burnett with five.

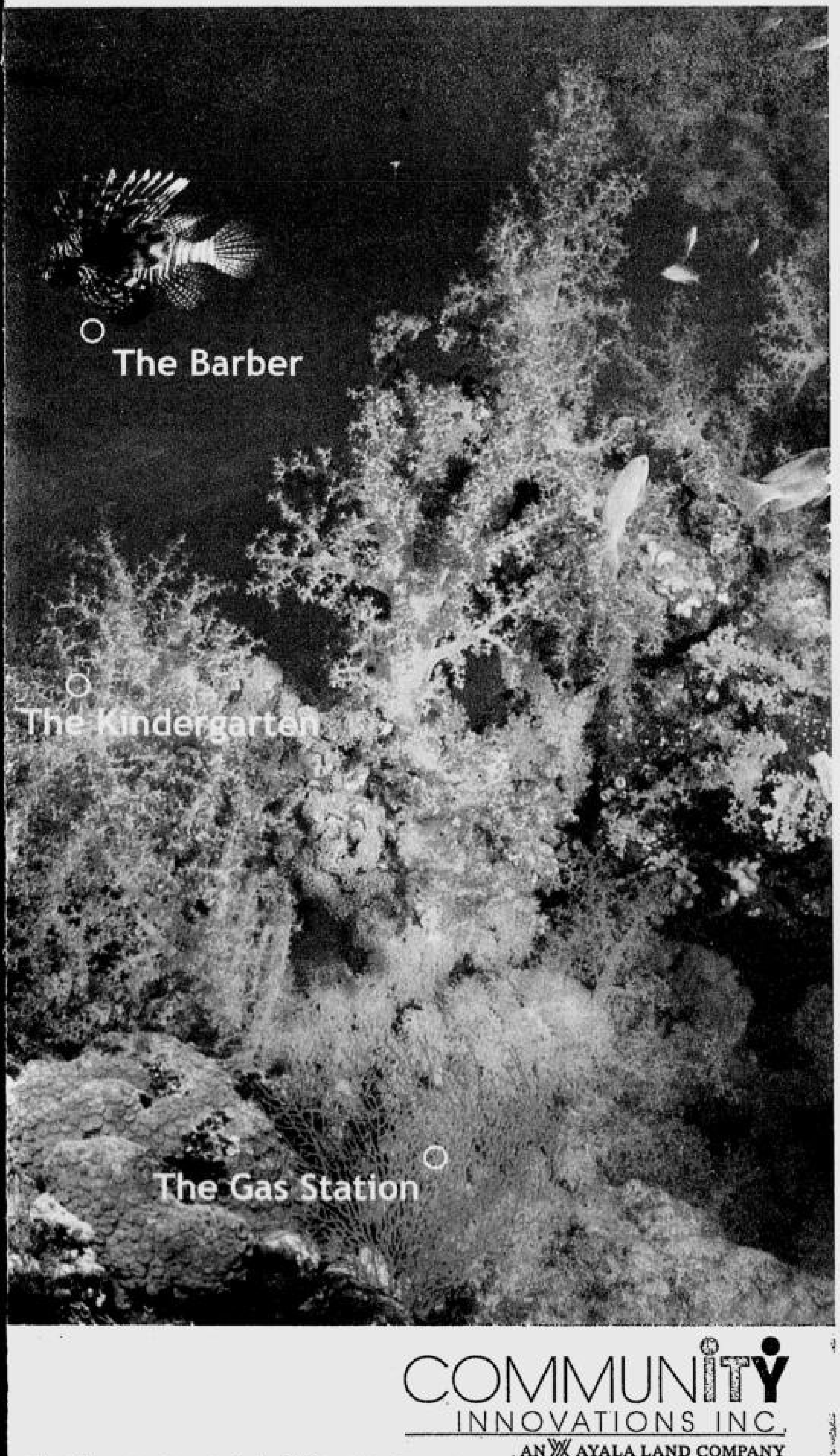
More than 2,400 entries were received this year. The best performing city was Bangkok with 29 awards, Tokyo with 22, Hong Kong with 18, Singapore with 15, Mumbai with six, Manila and Shanghai with four.

THE KAREN in the very popular and award-winning ad.



LOLO's acting tugs at the hearts of Filipinos and non-Filipinos.

MCDONALD'S "Lolo" by Leo Burnett stole the thunder from the big boys. The ad agency's tour de force TV ad, dominated the fast-food outlet, restaurant and retail store category with a big bite at the gold, relegating the big boys as mere finalists.



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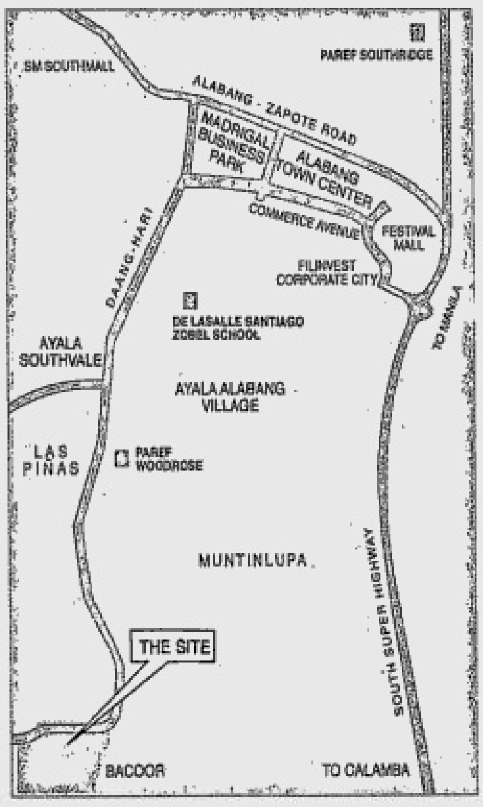

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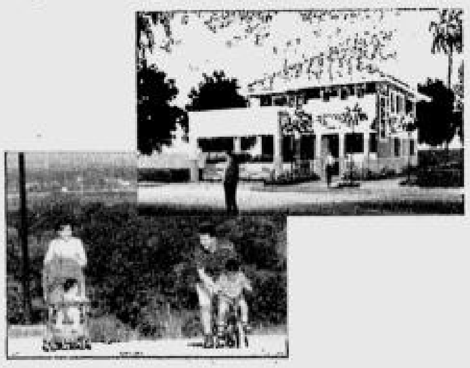

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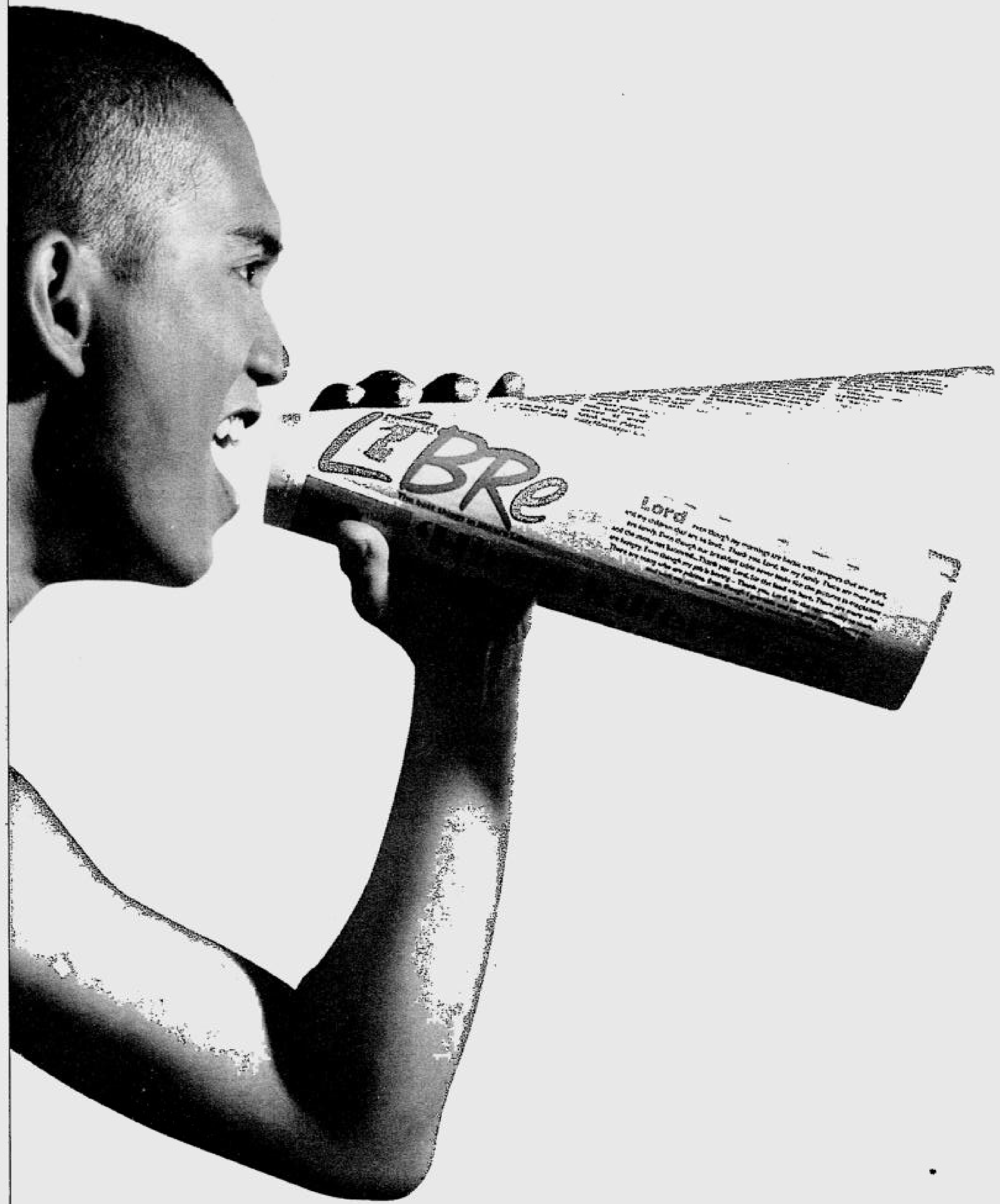

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Mixing the right products for special events

BEHIND the glitz and glamour of most entertainment and special events are companies and brands determined to push the products to the consumer, in this case the audience. Be it a golf tournament, a racing circuit or a fashion show, these events are turned into marketing outlets that are often more effective than hard-sell advertising.

One such example was the launch of Boracay Bodies Model Search 2002, a competition that pitted 20 male and female fresh faces in the modeling world. This was organized by Fuentes Publicity Network to promote the newly opened Sun Village Beachfront Resort in the island of Boracay.

Even the most engrossed onlooker during the pageantry of the competition night couldn't help but notice the presence of big brand names, chief among which were Philips and Omega, both global brands. Such hefty corporate backing, along with a host of other well-known branded presenters, provided a stunning subliminal impression of the show's significance to the audience.

One should not just pick any big-name sponsors, however, to make a marketing event successful. "Organizing a special event requires finding the right mix of products that are relevant to what you are trying to promote," explained Edd Fuentes, PR practitioner and owner of Sun Village Boracay Resorts. "Everything should be interwoven harmoniously to create a seamless totality to the entire production."

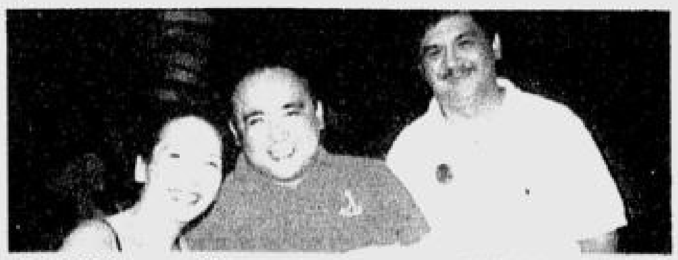
This relevance is shown by how Philips and Omega, for example, promote youthful lifestyles and high-end fashion, respectively. Philips, a global name in consumer electronics, is a dynamic supporter of various youth-oriented events and caters to a predominantly young market. "Philips has always been reaching out to the youth by coming up with consistently better products aimed at promoting their fun and energetic lifestyle," said Elen Torres, PR and communications officer of Philips Consumer Electronics.

The Boracay Bodies event, with its aim of promoting fresh faces in a fun-in-the-sun setting, was perfectly skewed to the brand's thrust and image. Thus, the judges and the audience were able to appreciate how the contestants projected themselves on screen via two large Philips flat-screen TVs. The winners also raved over winning a portable Philips CD player and radio.

In the case of Omega wristwatches, the modeling scenario provided the ideal opportunity to showcase the fashionable qualities of this world-renowned timepiece. This brand capitalizes on celebrity endorsement, gracing the wrists of Cindy Crawford, Pierce Brosnan, Michael Schumacher and other personalities, making it a fitting top prize to the Mr. and Ms. Boracay Bodies.

"Omega has always been not only into fashion and glamour but also adventure. We have an array of various elegant timepieces and sports watches, one of which is the Omega Seamaster that was awarded to the winners, an apt piece for any sea lover and beach body," said Louie Vargas, general manager of FE Zuellig (M) Inc., the local marketing arm of Omega.

TV and ramp personalities Marc Nelson and Rissa Samson hosted the show, as well as well-known fashion director Robbie Carmona ensuring its runaway success. The show even attracted representatives from the government such as Aklan Rep. Billie Calizo and Gov. Florencio Miraflores.



LOUIS Vuitton and Loewe country manager Gigi Mabanta, Omega product manager Martin Lacson and FE Zuellig (M) Inc. GM Louie Vargas.

Other brands that provided the right marketing "mix" were Loewe eyewear and fragrances, Figlia and Marie Nicole for the footwear and Pride Exchange for the eye-catching swimwear. For top designers, there were Mike dela Rosa, Efren Ocampo and Mel Meer of Bergamo, while Boracay's own B Salon, headed by Dante Yap, provided the styling. Also supporting the event was SEAir Philippines and other Boracay havens such as Lorenzo Resorts (Main, South and Villas), Alyssa Resort, Boracay Hills, Melinda's Garden Resort, Mountainview Resort and Orchids Boracay Resort.

Such corporate sponsorship and sensational array of personalities make special events a very interactive, as well as entertaining, way of helping products reach out to the market.

INDUSTRY experts estimate that in the next 10 years, demand for palm oil will rise considerably.

Coconut . . .

From page C4

no other uses but for cooking.

"Palm oil (CPO), though, has distinct advantage over coconut oil (CNO) in their prices. Thus, even if our coconut oil has a quality advantage, fast-food chains like Jollibee, McDonald's, Tropical Hut, Cindy's, Wendy's, KFC and other burger stores using tons of cooking oil for French fries, fried chicken etc. would naturally use the lower-priced CPO. Last year alone, the price differential between CNO and CPO is roughly P19,000 ($118) per ton, in favor of the former. On average, CNO is about $99 more expensive than CPO.

Philippine Coconut Authority Administrator Danilo Coronacion advises that "the difference in prices should tell us that other options other than cooking oil are there. To survive in the next millennium, what Mindanao coconut farmers need is to move away from cooking oil business toward the high-end market segment for processing of food items, feeds, pharmaceuticals, confectioneries and cosmetics. Our coconut oil has no serious competition along these lines," Coronacion claims.

"We use almost half of our palm oil import for fish canning. Moving into the high-end segment is the best direction to go into," he explains further.

Along the way, coconut farmer groups have more to say about the oil palm plantation offered to Malaysian investors. They are puzzled about the government's offer of 160,000 hectares of public agricultural land. This in the face of government's difficulty allotting land—the President can only offer 100,000 hectares of public land—to small Filipino farmers.

Indigenous peoples also have an ax to grind against the government's propensity to commit ancestral lands for the exploitation of private, local and foreign companies. In Agusan del Sur, for instance, a Manobo tribe has been contesting the encroachment of a private company in 5,000 hectares of their ancestral land. Farmers say they have reason to worry that government may again be committing ancestral land into dubious land deals like what had happened in the past.

So there. In the end, there will be losers and gainers. Will anyone be at the losing end or will it be a win-win situation for both? No one knows just yet.

Outdoor ads reel sales in

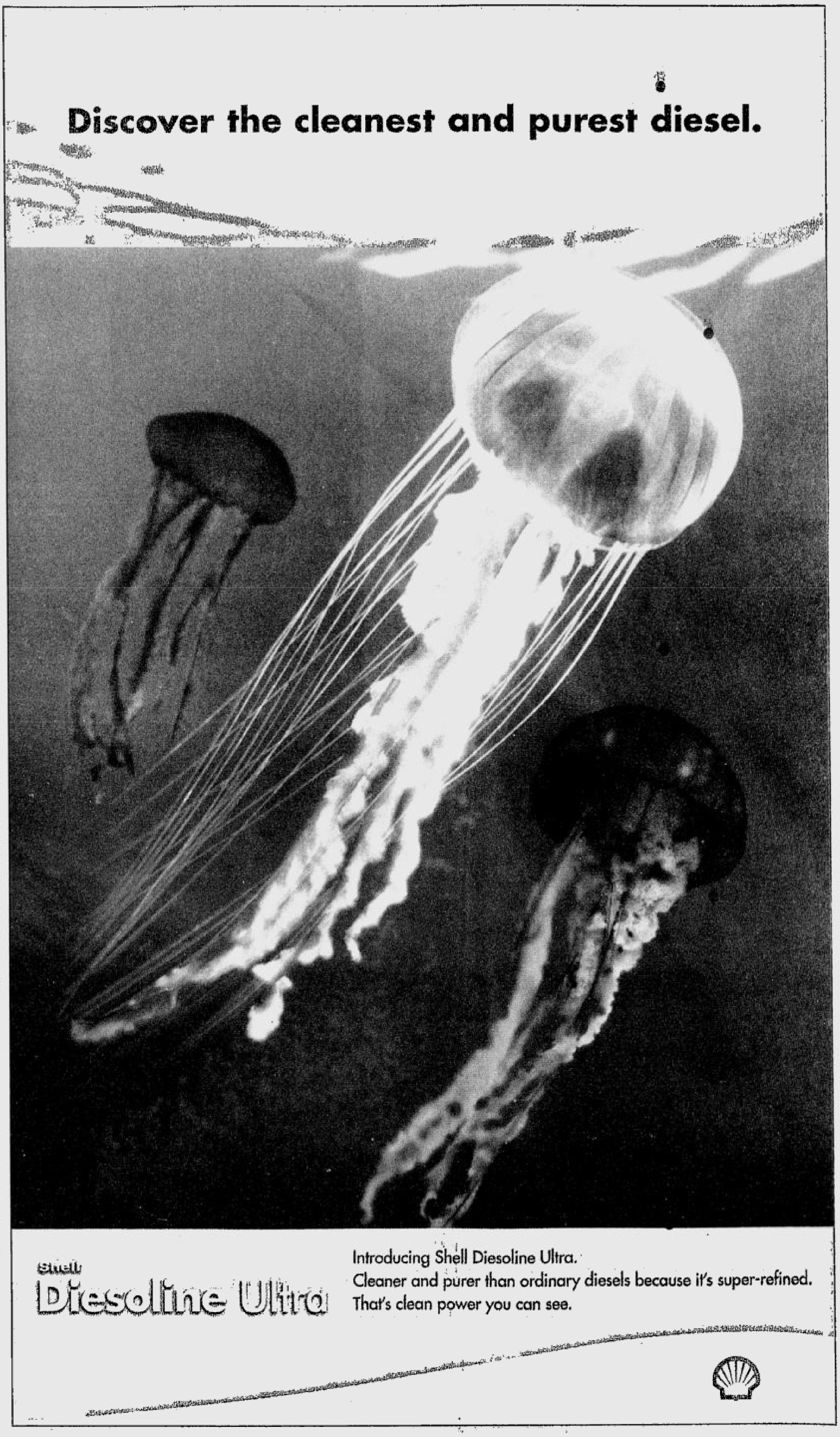
From page C3

- Preferably located in high traffic of motorists and commuter area, for example in the area of shopping centers.
- Cost of rental per month budget, around P50,000 to P150,000;
- Size, visibility, cost and reliability of outdoor agency.

Like any other tools, billboards also have their problems. Perez enumerates these difficulties as: unreasonable site owners (tremendous rate increases and restrictions); government regulations; vandals; force majure (typhoons, earthquakes) and saturated or cluttered sites.

The Outdoor Agencies Association of the Philippines (OAAP) strives to prevent these problems. However, not all the outdoor advertising agencies are members.

Despite these odds, however, the gargantuan sentinels of our highways—with the sunny smiles and twinkling eyes of their celebrity endorsers—will continue to guard the horizons.


Discover the cleanest and purest diesel.
Shell
Diesoline Ultra
Introducing Shell Diesoline Ultra.
Cleaner and purer than ordinary diesels because it's super-refined.
That's clean power you can see.

Cutting ad spending may be wrong way to go

Tina Arceo-Dumlao

BRAND building through advertising in the Philippines is off to a slow start this year with the growth in total advertising spending up by only 2 percent from 2001 to 2002.

This compared to a 21-percent growth rate from 2000 to 2001.

The latest study on advertising spending by AC Nielsen Media International, an international media research and analysis group , showed that there was even a 3-percent decline for February alone, compared to 28 percent during the previous two-year period.

AC Nielsen's Vivian Tin says in a briefing recently that the decline in the advertising spending for the first two months could be attributed to the companies' wait-and-see attitude, which could change by the middle of the year.

Forrest Didier, AC Nielsen managing director, said during the briefing that it was still too early to tell if the decline in the first two months will spill over to the end of the year.

He, however, stressed that it is during these times of uncertainty that companies should think about increasing their advertising and consequently build market share.

"The first reaction of many companies when there is a downturn is to cut advertising spending which may be a wrong way to go. I believe that a downturn is a good time to increase market share through advertising," Didier explained.

Many multinational and local companies shared this belief last year, which led to a robust 13.6 percent growth in advertising spending last year from $1.191 billion in 2000 to $1.354 billion last year.

This makes the Philippines the third fastest growing market for advertising in Asia, next only to Indonesia (27.5 percent growth) and China (15.8 percent).

The advertising markets in most of the countries included in the survey was driven mainly by increased spending from the consumer goods sector, indicating that demand continues for consumer goods despite economic and political difficulties.

Communications and telecommunications companies remained the biggest advertisers last year with spending even going up 33.8 percent, followed by hair shampoos' government agencies, food, powdered milk, entertainment or restaurants, business machines, detergents, banks and proprietary drugs.

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. emerged as the top advertised brand last year, with its spending up by 121.9 percent. PLDT is best known last year for its successful "Hello Billy" commercials.

The other top advertised brands last year were Sunsilk, Vaseline, Safeguard Soap, Close-up, Rejoice, SmartZed, Jollibee, Milo and San Miguel Beer.

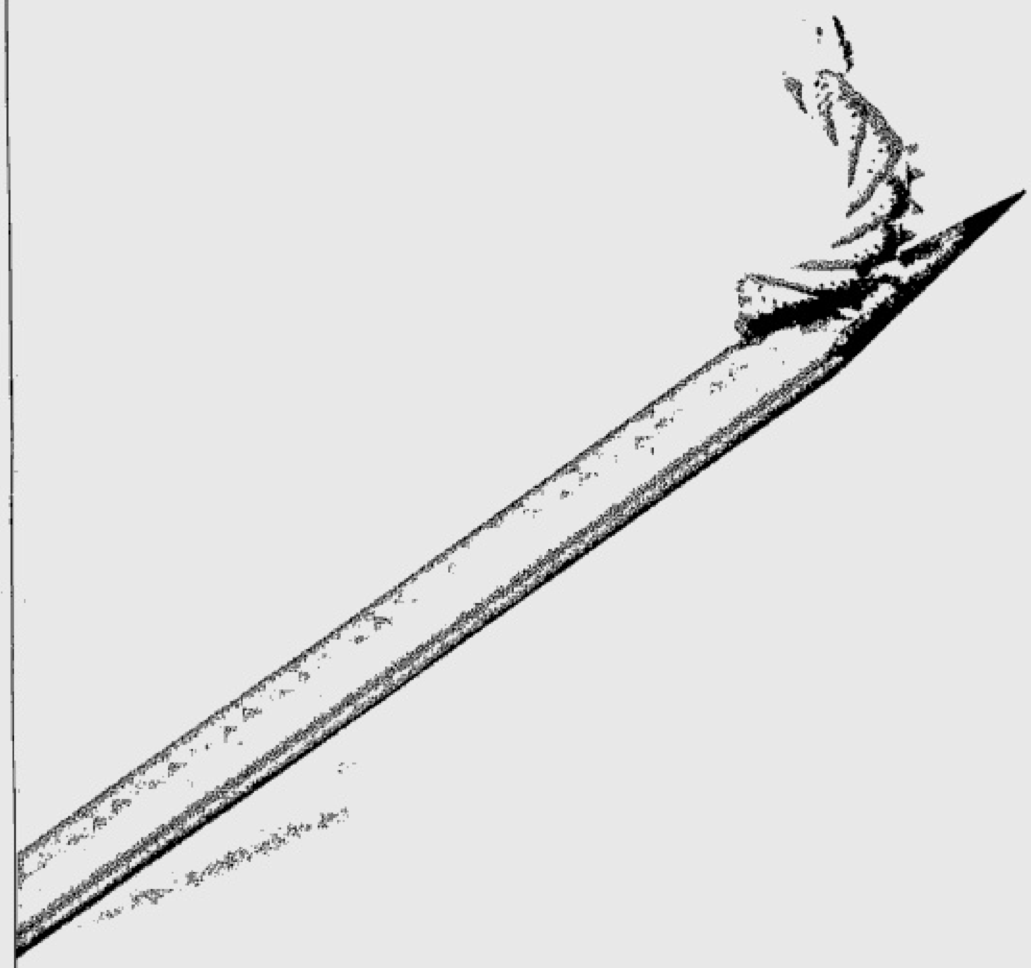
The advertising spending to back up the SmartZed brand rose 464.7 percent last year, followed by PLDT, Safeguard at 91.6 percent; Jollibee, 70.1 percent. In contrast, San Miguel's advertising was down 35.6 percent last year.

In terms of total company spendings, Unilever remained the biggest advertiser with P5 billion invested in print, radio and television campaigns. But while its advertising was down 10.7 percent, its closest competitor Procter and Gamble increased its spending by 61.4 percent, throwing support behind its brands such as Safeguard, Rejoice and Old Spice.

"This indicates that companies are willing to spend on their brands if they see that they need to defend their brand against competition or to increase market share," Tin explained.

Nestle emerged as the third biggest advertiser last year with its spending up 16.6 percent, followed by United Laboratories, which increased its advertising budget by 29.5 percent.

Rounding up the list of top advertisers are PLDT, Colgate-Palmolive, Globe Telecom, Smart Communication, Fortune Tobacco and Jollibee.



Don't put your dream on hold.

In the face of these challenging times, will you stop the clock
and wait? Or will you keep going for your dream?

A home. A family. A life.
Enduring dreams, the inspiration behind the Manansala.

The Manansala has well priced studios, one and two bedroom units
built for the young and upcoming.
And those who see a bright future just around the bend.

Own a unit for only P 18,000/month

Visit The Manansala model apartments at the Power Plant Mall
or at the Rockwell Information Center. For more information, call 890-6888 or 756-5022.

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SMART
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Jollibee.

PLDT
Clearly for you

SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

For feedback, text us at (0918)917-5026 or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso ◎ Subsection Editor Marge C. Enriquez

A hip God for imperfect lives

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

I HAD an accidental talk with a sinner-friend (everybody qualifies) this week, which set me off on a Lenten thought that hopefully we can all reflect on.

He/she (sorry, can't give the slightest clue) has just come from a short retreat feeling good and unburdened. My friend has slept around quite a bit (okay, around is a lot), and asked the spiritual counselor how in such sinful state, he/she could talk to God. The nun said matter-of-factly, "You are underestimating God's capacity to understand." The counselor followed up with an odd insight, "If He gave you the temptation, the libido, then He could also give you the strength (to resist) and redemption from it."

Of course, my friend never looked at it that way until then. The nun added, "He may not give you absolute approval, but He can give you absolute understanding and forgiveness." Then the counselor compared my friend to a broken vase and how God could take its flaws and imperfections, and repair it again and again.

I found that so in sync with our age, if not today's lifestyle, that is so replete with imperfect lives. Imperfection is the most convenient thing there is, just like texting. So instant, fleeting, so revocable and noncommittal, so immediately gratifying, so deceiving in its slickness. (I have a friend who's been wooed by a man—a frog-prince, she called him—largely through texting. He called her "princess" so sweetly over and over. She just fell for it.)

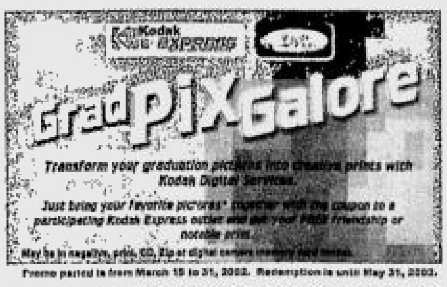
My friend has fallen flat on his/her face, just like we do quite regularly. What makes each fall bearable is our refusal to succumb to smugness. From this refusal comes the willingness to heal and be back on one's feet.

Our imperfect lives can only produce a Healing God. In our day and age, a Healing God can only be hip and cool, one tailor-made for our postmodern sins and the pain that won't go away.

At our management meeting this week (of all venues), talk

A HIP/ p.D5

My friend has slept around and asked the spiritual counselor how in such sinful state, he/she could talk to God



Kodak Express

GradPiXGalore

Transform your graduation pictures into creative prints with Kodak Digital Services.

Just bring your favorite pictures* together with the coupon to a participating Kodak Express outlet and get your FREE friendship or notable print.

*May be in negative, print, CD, Zip or digital camera memory card format.

Promo period is from March 15 to 31, 2002. Redemption is until May 31, 2002.

Participating outlets: SM Makati Department Store, Island Photo Center - Park Square, Photo Station - Shangri-La Plaza Ortigas, Photo 2 - Madison Square Ortigas, Picturia - Lopez, BF Parañaque, G&S Photo - Balintawak QC, Topics Studio - Malolos Bulacan, Color Vision - Robinsons Iloilo and Manhattan Color Lab - Plaza Mart, Bacolod

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Basta't Ikaw album tour

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SM CENTERPOINT
MAR. 24 • 4pm
SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT

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Hair Straightening Salon

THE HAIR STRAIGHTENING AND TREATMENT SPECIALIST

The latest in Hair Straightening technology is now at GOING STRAIGHT

Introducing SUPER STRAIGHT

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TRIM / COLOR CORRECTIVE / ANTI DANDRUFF
HEAD MASSAGE / SHAMPOO

-Eilene Montemayor

BRANCHES:
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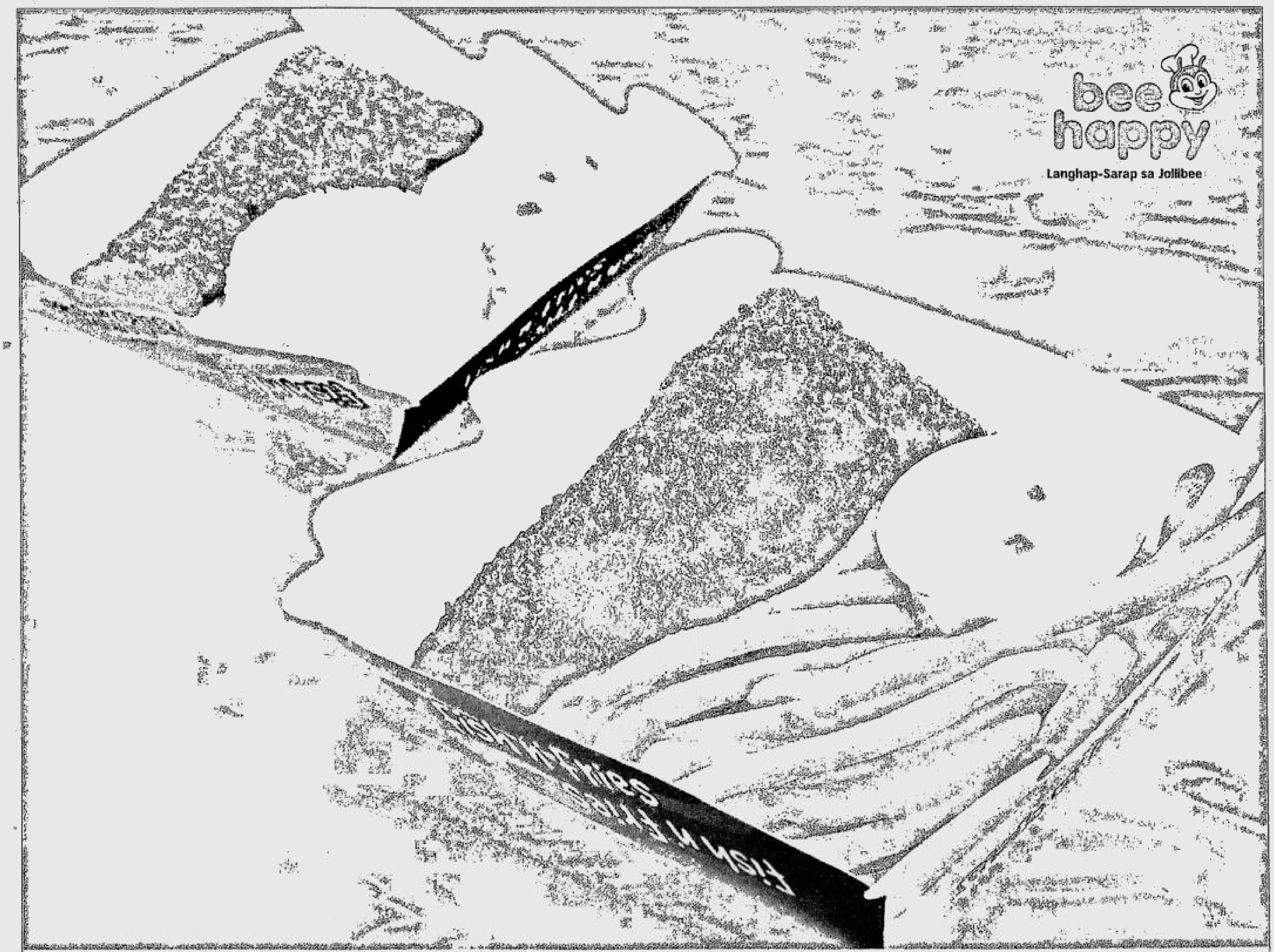
SM FAIRVIEW, 935-7433
SM BACOOR, (046) 970-4852
SM SOUTHMALL, 805-9611
MAKATI CINEMA SQUARE, 844-2129
SM MEGAMALL, 633-7048
GOTESCO GRAND CENTRAL, 363-6689
ROBINSONS PLACE ERMITA, 536-8031
STA. LUCIA EAST GRAND MALL, 681-7437
ROBINSONS PLACE BACOLOD, (034) 441-1064
SM CITY MANILA, 400-5623
SM CITY PAMPANGA, (045) 961-2725
SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT, 826-8841
SM CITY NORTH EDSA, 920-3367
SM CENTERPOINT, 716-1549

NOW OPEN! SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT, 3RD FLR. Tel. No.: 826-8841

NOW OPEN! SM CITY DAVAO 2ND FLOOR



Jollibee Catch of the Day

Jollibee Fish n' Fries and Fish n' Rice. A tender fish fillet deep-fried to a perfect golden brown and served with a special tartar dip. Enjoy it with good ol' fries or steaming rice. Catch 100% real fish goodness only at Jollibee.

₱55 each

Fish n' Fries

Fish n' Rice

SMART zed™

The biggest text-based quiz game is now even bigger! Join SMART zed

Text to Milli,000,000ns Quiz Game

E! Hollywood Edition

When it comes to trivia, Some Like It Hollywood.

Use your knowledge of showbiz trivia for a chance at the ₱1,000,000 grand prize plus other big cash prizes every week. Join now!
The more correct answers, the more chances of winning. So if you want to get rich like a movie star, get into SMART zed Text to Millions E! Hollywood Edition today!

Weekly Draws (January 14, 21 & 28; February 11, 18 & 25; March 11, 18 & 25): ₱50,000 • 1st Monthly Draw (February 4): ₱100,000 • 2nd Monthly Draw (March 4): ₱200,000 • Grand Draw (April 1): ₱1,000,000

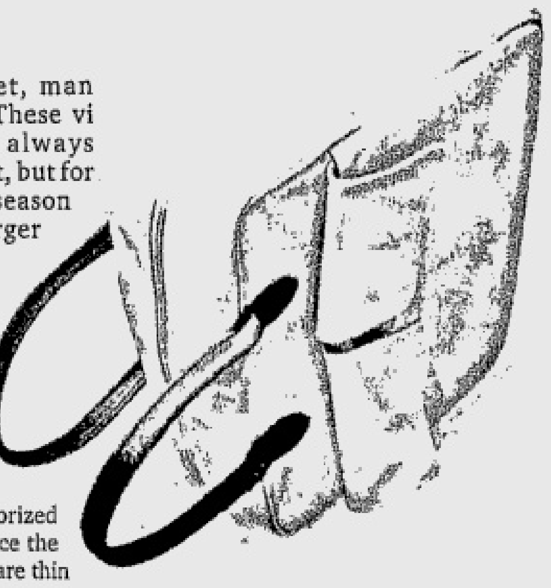
HOW TO JOIN: Key in QUIZspaceJOINspace<name>/<address> and send to 288. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS: Key in QUIZspace<question number>space<answer> and send to 288. For more info, key in HELP QUIZ and send to 288.

Summer's in the bag

By Camille Cruz-Reyes
Contributor
Photos by Chito Vecina
VISUAL CONCEPT BY ALBERT AVELLANA

BLACK doctor bag larger than your usual pouch

LARGE camel-colored versatile tote bag



SUMMER means sherbet, mangoes, lime and traffic. These vibrant tones will always twinkle in the sunlight, but for now the spice of the season is concentrated on a larger scale: bags.

We can ditch our small, tiny bags for now and replace them with larger ones. They serve the same purpose anyway. Besides, not all bags are slung on the shoulders; they are meant for hand carrying, too.

Daily wear can easily be accessorized through the right kind of bag. Since the weather gets hot and our clothing are thin in fabric and wrinkle easily, it is best to carry a tote bag.

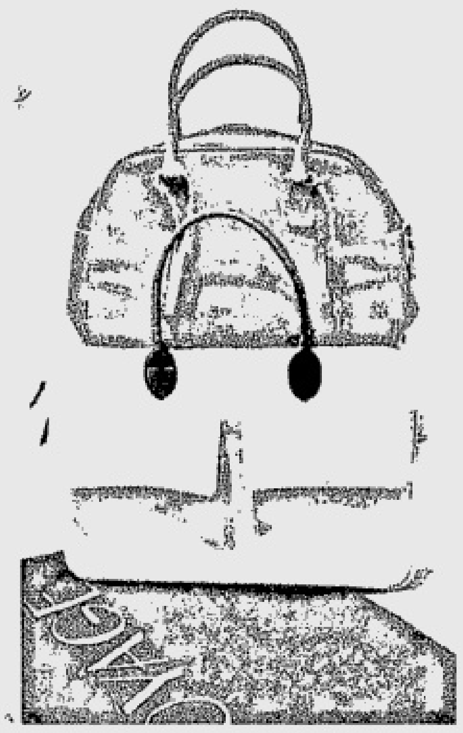
Large totes are making a statement, whether two-toned, textured, solid or just plain fabulous.

A comfortable-sized bag would be those similar to bowling or doctor bags. They are timeless and classic; they keep evolving. In red or camel shade, these bags are a nice alternative to black. Black is always a basic, but try lighter tones to jive with the spirit of summer.

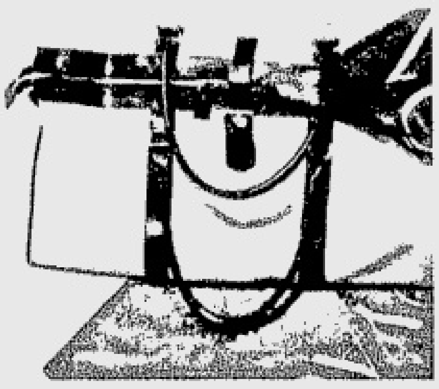
The duffle bags or weekend bags are hefty. They may be a stylish match to your casual attire. Two-toned or stitched, large weekend totes or athletic bags may revamp your image.

As we always seem to be carrying so many valuables and stuffing them in our small tiny bags, we can change our ways and go larger because sometimes, the bigger, the better.

E-mail the author at Unit 36D@vasia.com



WEEKEND bag with flat pockets and bowling bag with lock



TWO-TONED brown duffle bag

Bags are bigger to reflect the tremendous burst of the sun

ALL ITEMS FROM VOYAGE
2/F POWER PLANT MALL
ROCKWELL, MAKATI
TEL. 890-2024;
3/F SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL
TEL. 634-4020

Quick way to look younger

GET healthy-looking, beautiful skin in two simple, inexpensive steps with Mary Kay's new skin-care line for the young—Velocity.

The Velocity line consists of a cleanser and a moisturizer that's right for all skin types. The lightly scented facial cleanser deep cleans to remove dirt and grime, tones to refresh, while its exfoliation beads lift dead cells, leaving skin refined.

Velocity Lightweight Moisturizer's oil-free and quick absorbing formula works fast to smooth and soften, while its oil-absorbing ingredients help control excess oil.

Complementing the Velocity skin care package is the Velocity Eau de Parfum. The extraordinary fragrance, which contains banana flower, has an orange-and-iridescent upside-down bottle.

Take advantage of the Velocity promo until March 31—facial cleanser and lightweight moisturizer for P1,100 instead of P1,325; and the eau de parfum for P1,575 instead of P1,750.

Visit Mary Kay Philippines at its head office, La Fuerza Compound, 2241 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City. Call 893-4855.

Raffles Fine Arts
a new associate gallery of THE TOMLINSON COLLECTION

PURE LAND
Sacred Arts of Tibet

An exhibition of
Sculptures & Furniture
from the Land of Snows

Saturday, March 16
to
Sunday, March 24,2002

58 Jupiter St.
Bel-Air Village, Makati City
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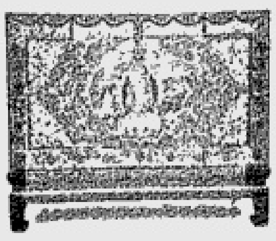
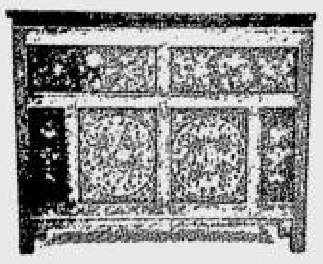
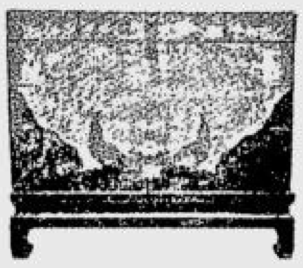
Gallery Hours: 10am to 6pm







At the Children's Shoes Department

CONGRATS
Gibi

Marching leathers in classic black

We've got it all for you! SM DEPARTMENT STORE
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San Pablo City • Batangas City • SM City Pampanga • SM City Cebu
Ayala Center Cebu • Iloilo City • Davao City • Cagayan de Oro City • Iligan City
Zamboanga City

The red and the black–and some white

RED: passionate, fiery, explosive. White: innocent, pure, calm. Black: mysterious, elegant, refined.

It is no wonder that Human, the country's ultimate alternative clothing store, would look to these shades for inspiration for its latest designs. From shirts and skirts to sleek pants and jeans, shades of red, white and black are playfully exploited and artfully merged.

The colors, don in separates or mixed, express vibrant personalities. If you're going for the mysterious, somber look, go black all the way. If you want to spice it up a little, put on a red shirt over a black skirt or pants.

Be daring. Show your fiery and passionate personality with an all-red ensemble.

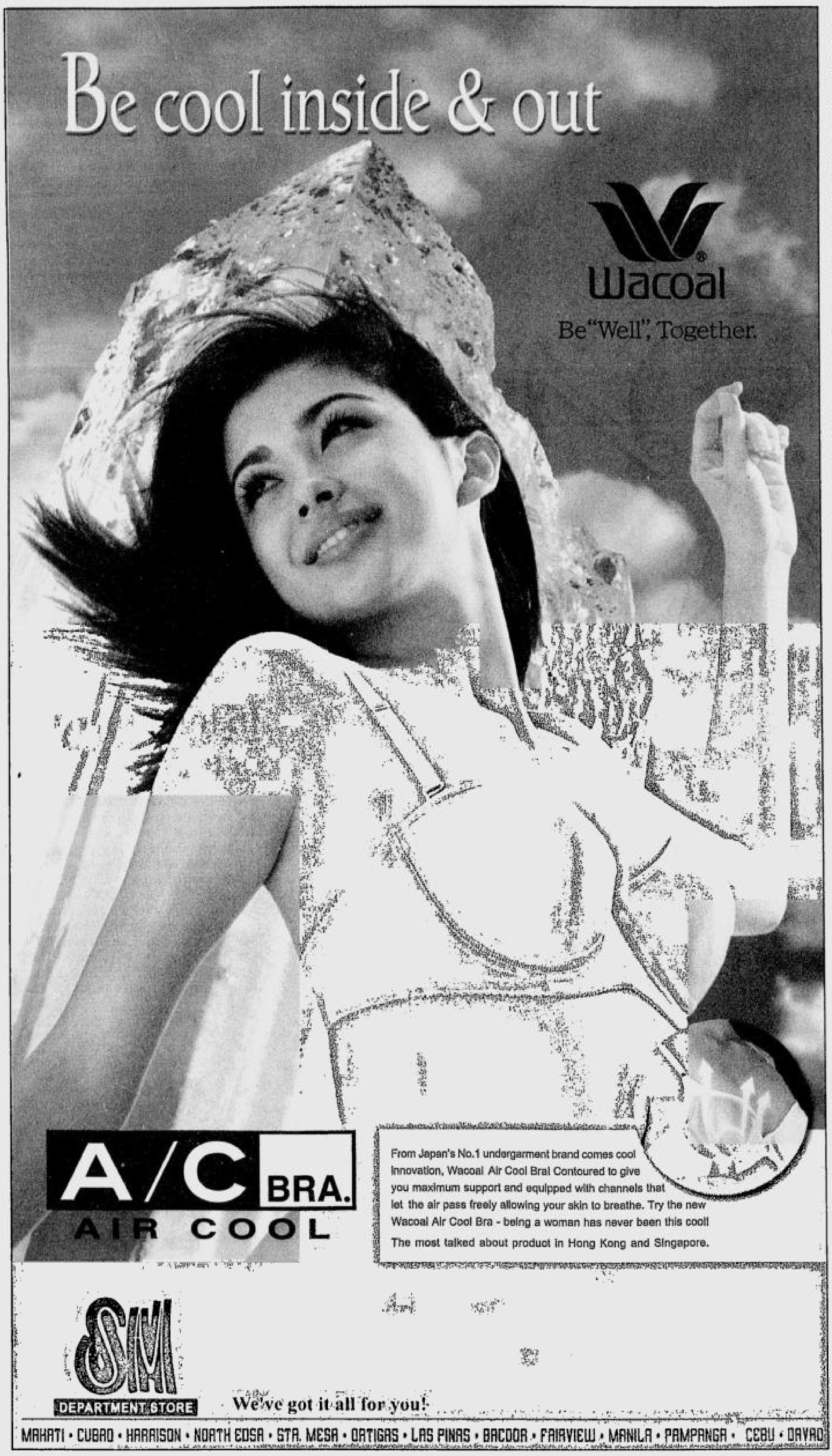
You can try the chaste approach and go the all-white route. Vamp it up with a red top. Or be classy in a black-and-white combination.

And the gents need not fret. These colors are not exclusive for the ladies. With the right amount of panache, a guy with an adventurous streak could try mixing all three colors. For the more conventional types, there are the black pants and white shirt.

BUBBLES and Geoffrey wearing white button front shirt. Geoffrey pairs it with white loose pants with back welt pocket and a black leather belt. Bubbles accessorizes with a black garrison belt with stone.

GEOFFREY wears red long-sleeved shirt with print paired with black loose pants with back welt pocket and black leather belt.

In its latest designs, Human shows that passion, innocence and mystery are only too human



From Japan's No.1 undergarment brand comes cool Innovation, Wacoal Air Cool Bra! Contoured to give you maximum support and equipped with channels that let the air pass freely allowing your skin to breathe. Try the new Wacoal Air Cool Bra - being a woman has never been this cool!

The most talked about product in Hong Kong and Singapore.

SM DEPARTMENT STORE

We've got it all for you!

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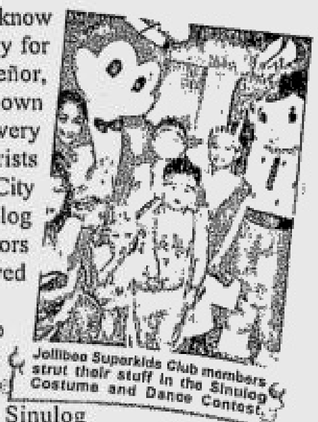
Jollibee Journal

A fete for Pit Señor!



Jollibee Superkids Club members strut their stuff in the Sinulog Costume and Dance Contest.

Cebuanos really know how to throw a party for their beloved Pit Señor, more commonly known as the Sto. Niño. Every year, locals and tourists alike troop to Cebu City for the annual Sinulog Festival, which honors the province's beloved patron saint.

Jollibee Metro Colon store in downtown Cebu City joined in the Sinulog frenzy and held a Sinulog Costume and Dance Contest for its Superkids Club members.

A total of 80 participants trooped to the Jollibee store to parade and compete. In Mardi Gras style, the Superkids Club members brought the house down with their colorful costumes and electrifying dance numbers.

Sheena Gacayan, who wore a Sto. Niño inspired costume, was voted as Best in Costume, while the 5-girl team of the Rhythm Dancers, who performed a Sinulog Dance, won the Best Interpretative Dance.

Congratulations to all of you! *Magkita 'ta sa susunod na Hala Bira!*

Curtain calls at La Salle Zobel

Curtains up as Jollibee sets the stage to discover the next Broadway sensations.

Jollibee and La Salle Zobel team up to champion the Pinoy youth's creativity.

Jollibee recently signed a two-year sponsorship contract with La Salle Santiago Zobel School in Alabang in support of the many cultural projects of the school's Center for Performing Arts (CPA). This is in line with the company's commitment to nurturing the talent and creativity of the Filipino youth.

Watch out for CPA's theatrical line-ups that will showcase the artistry and craft of the La Sallian. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the shows. Bee Happy!

A *jolly* ride around North Luzon

A team of 600 local and foreign journalists, riding in a caravan of 80 Ford Vehicles, recently undertook a grueling 6-day road trip to Northern Luzon for the first ever Explore 2002.

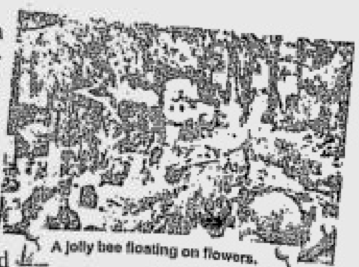
Organized by the North Philippines Tourism Council, Explore 2002 aims to promote exploration and adventure in Northern Luzon.

Last month, the explorers traveled to scenic and remote areas in Clark, Pampanga; Bayombong, Nueva Ecija; Banaue Ifugao; Callao Caves in Cagayan, Pagudpud Beach in Ilocos Norte, Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Baguio City and Subic Bay Freeport in Olongapo.

Jollibee welcomed all 600 travelers in their every provincial stop with big welcome banners, free drinks and 10% discount on food items in participating Jollibee stores namely, Jollibee Clark, Jollibee Solano, Jollibee Tuguegarao Junction, Jollibee Laoag, Jollibee Baguio-Session, Jollibee Baguio-Gov. Pack, Jollibee Vigan, and Jollibee Olongapo.

So when driving anywhere in North Luzon, stop, look, and dine at Jollibee. Bee Happy!

A thousand *blooms* and faces at Panagbenga 2002



A jolly bee floating on flowers.

There was a big frenzy for flower power at this year's *Panagbenga*, Baguio City's most awaited social event, drawing a crowd of almost half a million.

Literally meaning, "Let a thousand flowers bloom", *Panagbenga* showcases Baguio's colorful blooms and artistic ingenuity.

Throngs of happy, smiling faces lined up the streets of the Summer Capital just to catch a glimpse of colorful street performers and spectacular floats.

All three Jollibee Stores in Baguio took part in the festivities with Jollibee and Hetty in a jolly dance number with students from the Quezon Elementary School as they rode on a spectacular float decorated with bromeliads, impatience flowers, chrysanthemums and petunia blooms. A shower of confetti, candy and Bee Happy stickers delighted the eager crowds. *Bee Happy uli sa 2003!*

For feedback, comments, or suggestions, please write to:
Jollibee Journal
c/o The Marketing Division
Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines
journal@jollibee.com.ph

bee happy

Fashion spree for a week

By Marge C. Enriquez

The annual Fashion Week is a shot in the arm of a faltering fashion industry

WHAT begun as a simple summer activity has become an event that helps to keep the fashion industry alive.

The Philippine Fashion Week, which will run from April 4-14 at the Glorietta Activity Center, includes not only the local and ready-to-wear labels, but also the participation of 45 Filipino designers.

Fashion Week began five years ago when Ayala Land Inc. tapped producer-director Joey Espino to produce fashion shows in the mall. Known for large-scale projects, Espino had previously directed big shows at the Ayala Center, such as the relaunches of Jag and Freego, and the Philippine Retailers' Association and Asian Retailers' Convention.

Abroad there are months of the year when designers present their forecasts. Through these shows, buyers and consumers can anticipate the latest trends from accessories to apparel.

Fashion Week started out in the major capitals in the West. Lately, the Pacific has caught on as shown by the Mercedes Fashion Week in Sydney in May, and fashion weeks in Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok. The Philippine Fashion Week is an initiative of Espino and his brother Audie of Runway Productions.

Cost-efficient

The first participants of Fashion Week were retailers with advertising budgets. Instead of launching independent special events, they felt it was more cost-efficient to join a series of shows in one venue. Since many of the retailers had budgets for a fashion show, it was logical to unite them in a major activity that aimed to draw in the crowds and press coverage.

Espino compares Fashion Week to putting up a gala show in a mall. Unlike in a gala where people buy tickets, Fashion Week is free to the public. "People's tastes and preferences get uplifted without having to buy a ticket," he says.

Espino says the shows boost store sales. The same styles modeled on the runway are snapped up off the racks.

Not only does Fashion Week create more economic activity, it also teaches Filipinos how to dress up, explains Espino. The Filipino has yet to distinguish dressing up for the summer months and for holidays. Because of the year-round warm weather, they still wear summer clothes during Christmas.

"We need to raise people's consciousness, especially in sensible wardrobe building," says Espino. Sometimes people buy new pieces that are worn at the wrong season or at the wrong occasion. The shows aim to educate the buying public on how to dress appropriately according to the seasons and how to coordinate their clothes.

NO MORE
BY
deSIGN

PENSHOPPE hosts one of the major events in Fashion Week.

Filipinos learn the concept of mixing and matching from the runways. If people see models in denim pants paired with the latest shirts, consumers will be enticed to update their wardrobe. They may stick to their denims but will look for bright colors in order to be in sync with global trends.

"They can get ideas on how to stretch their money. They can be stylish without totally splurging," says Espino.

Criticism

At first there was criticism that Fashion Week focused on imported labels. Espino explains that through Fashion Week, Filipinos get to see how the clothes, originally designed for Western models, will suit their complexion and body structure. He adds that these collections are also seen in stores in other parts of the world. This is an indication that the principals consider the Philippines as an important market.

Fashion Week now includes Filipino designers in the ready-to-wear and made-to-measure businesses. This is a boost to the local designers whose businesses are threatened by cheap imported labels. Runway Productions is sponsoring the local designers.

"Filipino designers are not backed up by businessmen. We have to support them," Espino says.

The events include the L'Oréal New Generation and Avant-Garde designers, Ready-to-Wear collections and the Formal/Luxe Wear Collections. Espino says the Designers' Nights are not only a showcase of Filipino talent and ingenuity, they also help develop marketing skills. When the press creates an awareness of the designs, the consumers become interested. The styles featured in the Fashion Week are normally sold out.

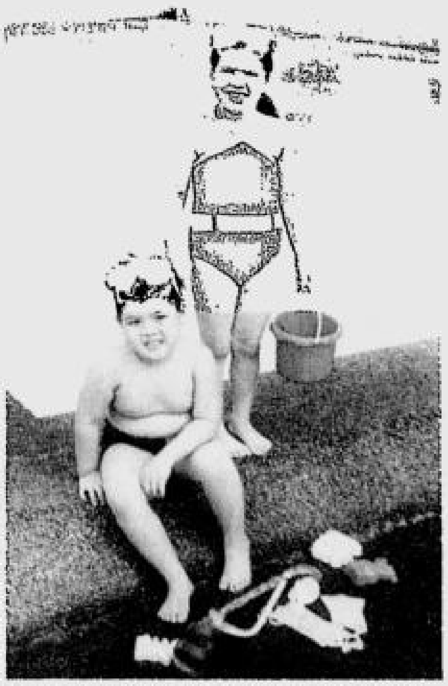
This year, the big shows are Speedo and Penshoppe, which will introduce the MTV Penshoppe Youth Council. Adidas will launch a new line that focuses on apparel aside from footwear. Jag is launching its children's line. Lee has a tie-up with the "MTV Party Zone" at the end of the series. There will be parties and mini concerts of bands after the show.

Fashion Week will involve as many as 70 models, including children. Hair and makeup are by Geoff Simpson's Preve, Jinky Illusorio and Lala Flores.

In the swim of things

ROBINSONS Department Store (RDS) offers the latest swimwear for kids to wear when they go swimming to cool off during the hot months ahead.

In fun and colorful styles, the swimwear includes bikini and short trunks for boys and tankinis and one-piece suits for girls. Check them out at RDS branches at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Novaliches, Imus, Cebu, Bacolod and Iloilo, Robinsons Metro East, Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, Tutuban Center, Starmall Shaw, Metropolis Star Alabang, Waltermart Sta. Rosa and Gen. Trias.



BOY'S short trunks and girls' one-piece halter bathing suit

E
F
PROKIDS
Time to change
PETRON-PNCC
LAKBAY
ALALAY
2002

When baby's diaper is full, it's time to change at Petron.

This Holy Week, PROKIDS diaper teams up with **Petron Lakbay Alalay 2002**, so you don't have to worry about baby's needs while on the road. Just drop by at our diaper changing stations in 17 select Petron outlets from North to South Luzon. And if your baby is wearing PROKIDS, you get exciting items for FREE!

A hip God for imperfect lives

From page D1

strayed to how some saints gruesomely met their deaths, because our marketing director **Boots Villavecer** had been reading up on them (don't ask me why). Boots shared his research, "One martyr was sliced in half through the butt. Another got his skin peeled off, layer by layer. Still another had his limbs and arms tied to four horses who galloped away." Then Boots turned reflective but belligerent: "How could they suffer (like) that for their God? What made them presume God wanted that kind of suffering? Ours is not a suffering God. He can't be all literal suffering." Dead stare at Boots. Silence. Agenda resumed. It was much easier to discuss sales targets.

On second thought, Boots just echoes our need to fashion God to meet our heroisms and sins, so different from the early Christian days of a wrathful God.

Deliverance, like temptation, is always at our fingertips. God has taken on techno-speed in making us vulnerable, then redeeming us; in granting our wants and needs and just as quickly depriving us of them. He soothes the pain that He lets us have.

I asked **Marge E.** what she's doing this Holy Week. Finishing her articles, she said. With an all-work lifestyle, how on earth will you get a love life, I asked her. She said, "From God," then she guffawed.

This age's all-purpose God is good enough for me. Perfect for all kinds of pain.

Bob's Baguio

Now on to more temporal matters. My pulse says Baguio is back on top of our destination chart, after it dipped in the post-earthquake '90s. This is thanks in part to the *ukay-ukay*, which the bargain-hunter in all of us finds irresistible, and also to the range of places to stay in and lifestyle haunts to check out. Plus, it has the weather Tagaytay, Clark or Subic can't give.

We got to talk to **Robert John "Bob" Sobrepeña**, the besieged chair of Fil-Estate, which leads the consortium developing Camp John Hay. Where John Hay is concerned, we're all possessive since it held a place in our childhood, from its coffee shop to its steak and ice cream. No childhood memory is sweet without John Hay.

Sobrepeña sounded confident that all is well with his John Hay, at least where lifestyle features are concerned. He said they remained deadset on developing its ecotourism potential, to prove that development "can enhance nature" and turn it into a world-class destination. By constructing buildings no higher than a pine tree, by not using up much land, and by planting 100 trees for every tree cut down, he said they were on tract in preserving nature and implementing forest management. What he's focusing on now is traffic management within the camp. To reduce the number of cars roaming it, they will implement satellite parking (zones) and will develop within the camp a public transport system that runs on LPG, just like what he's seen in Tokyo.

They're also developing eco trails and an artists' village where artists can engage in their crafts and sell their work to visitors. "We want to make a statement for the future, set the standards for developing world-class ecotourism destination." He honestly believes that people are beginning to understand what they're doing.

And buying it, apparently. The Golf Club shares are selling well; in fact he expects sales to be even better this year. Done with the selling of the private developments, the company is now kicking off the public phase, such as the opening of the Camp John Hay Manor, a hotel with high-end and medium-scale restos. They're beginning to develop the 19th Tee Coffeeshop.

What I found interesting, however, was Sobrepeña's plan to help solve the worsening traffic on Session Road. He's proposed the construction of a tram on Session Road, similar to that in San Francisco, so that this major artery will be off-limits to public vehicles. He believes that the tram will be both scenic, efficient and decongesting (but of course, the man is behind the MRT).

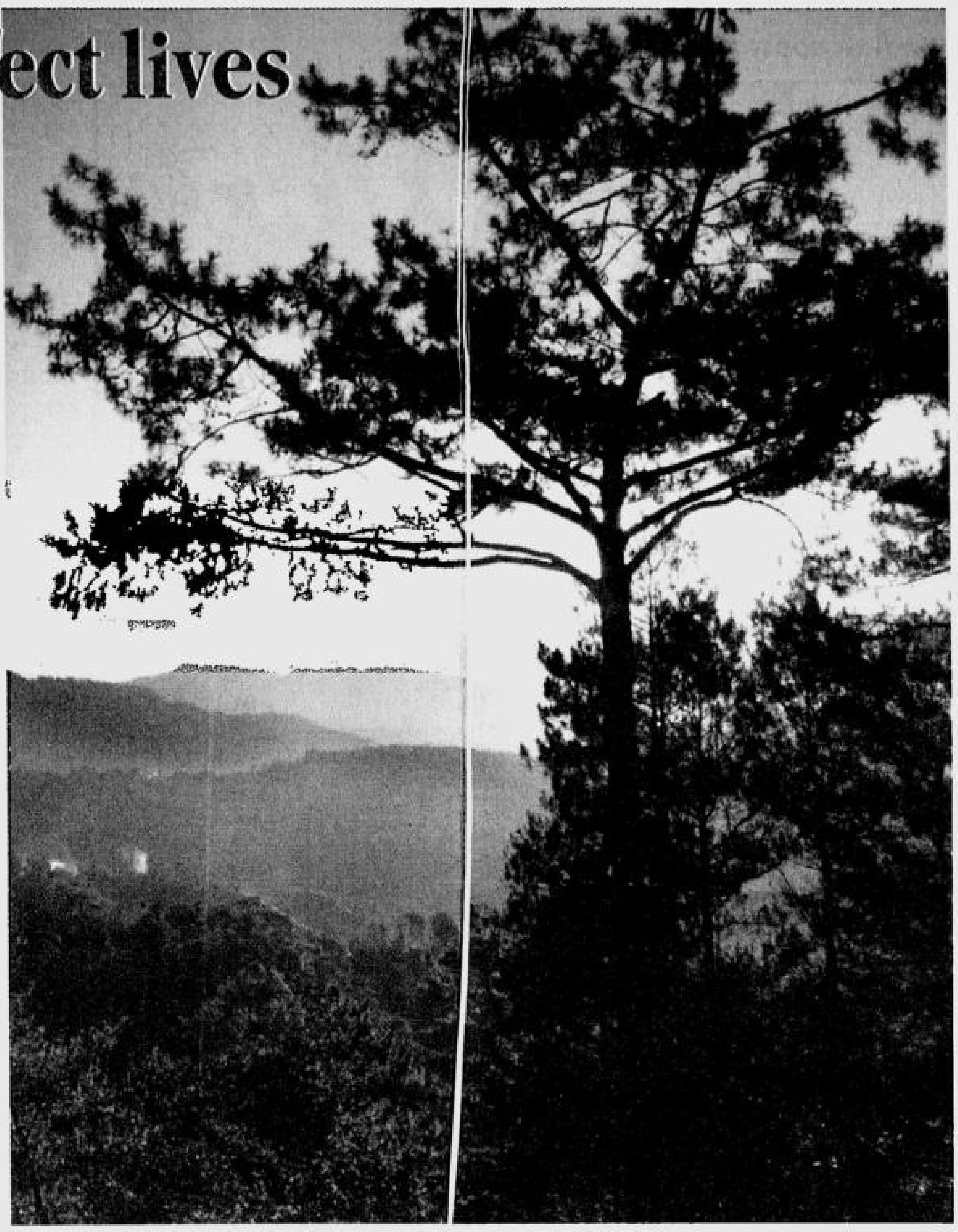
This man is devoted to golf (after his tennis phase), good food and wine. A Liacom graduate of De la Salle, he said it's his grounding on psychology, marketing and philosophy that molded his vision of real-estate development. It is philosophy, he said, that helps him "put things in perspective."

"It helps you deal with stress for at the end of the day, you realize you don't own anything, that you're just a custodian of things, and can choose to leave behind the good or the bad," he said. He certainly can use that thinking now.

What I also found interesting was how this workaholic decided years ago to resettle his wife and brood of seven abroad after he realized that segmenting family time made for quality time and better parenting. He visits them every few weeks, during which he spends undivided time with the children for days on end, with undivided focus and effort. And when he's here, he plunges into work. He's the first man I met with such a style of parenting, suited to high-stakes business, e-mail and such, and, of course, apt for his resources. Twenty first-century parenting for a 21st-century developer.

When I drive to Baguio in the distant future, I will be eager to see how this man has repackaged my ancient childhood, if indeed he has.

E-mail the author at tsanjuan@skyinet.net



SUNRISE in Camp John Hay before the summer

PHOTO: CHITO VECINA

Lateral
thinking?

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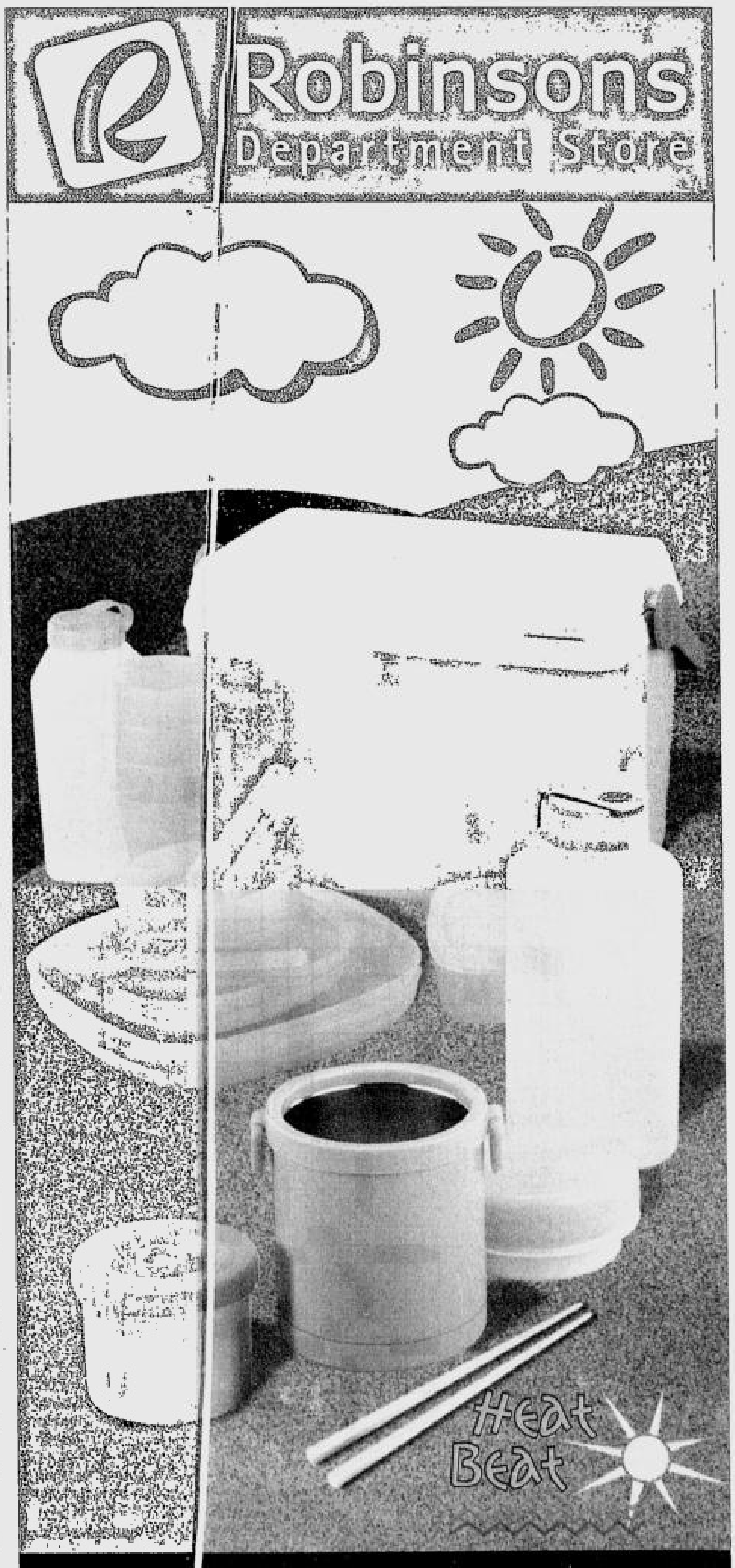

Robinsons Galleria | Robinsons Place Manila, Novaliches, Imus, Cebu, Bacolod, Iloilo | Robinsons Metro East
Robinsons Starmills Pampanga | Starmall Shaw | Metropolis Star Alabang

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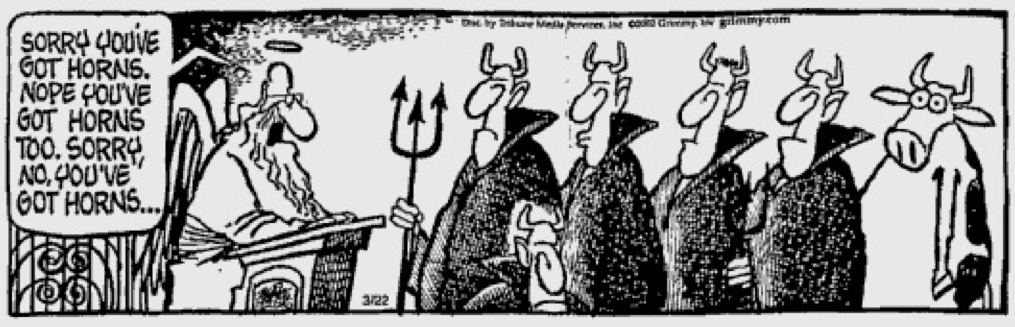
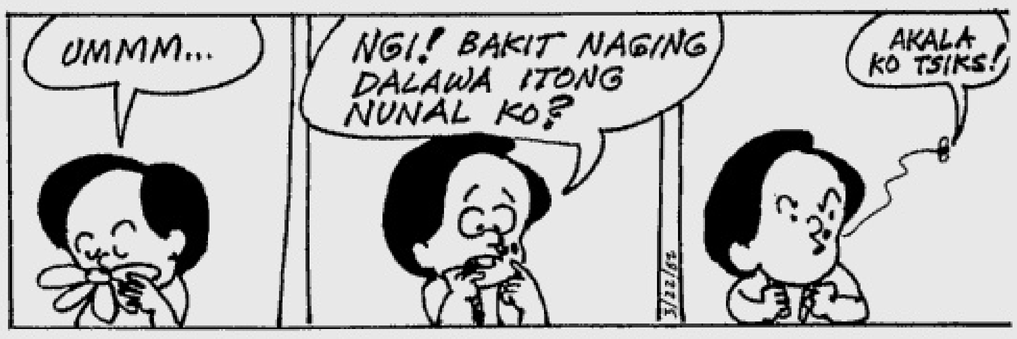
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SORRY YOU'VE GOT HORNS. NOPE YOU'VE GOT HORNS TOO. SORRY, NO, YOU'VE GOT HORNS...
Dist. by Tribune Media Services, Inc ©2002 Grimmy, Inc grimmy.com
3/22

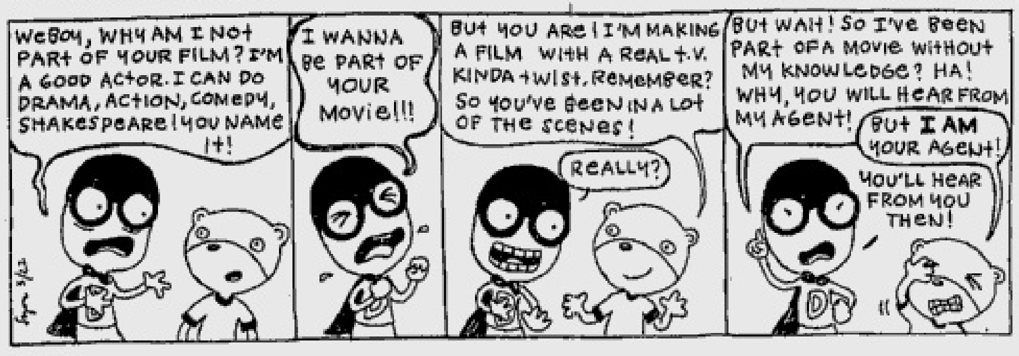
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


UMMM...
NGI! BAKIT NAGING DALAWA ITONG NUNAL KO?
AKALA KO TSIKS!
3/22/02

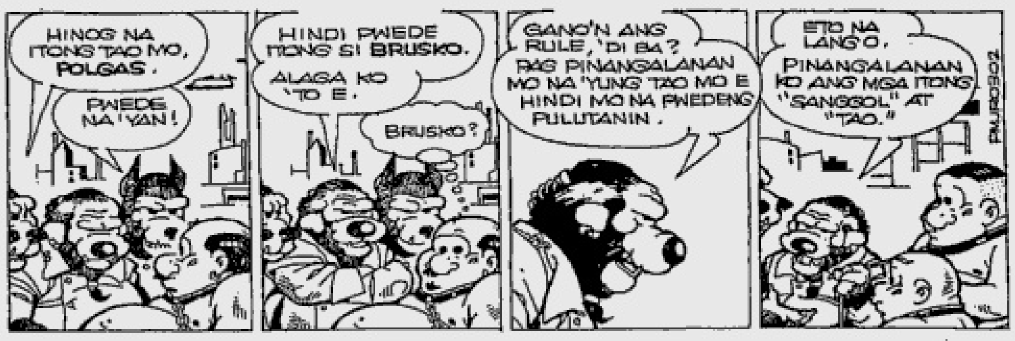
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WEBOY, WHY AM I NOT PART OF YOUR FILM? I'M A GOOD ACTOR. I CAN DO DRAMA, ACTION, COMEDY, SHAKESPEARE! YOU NAME IT!
I WANNA BE PART OF YOUR MOVIE!!!
BUT YOU ARE! I'M MAKING A FILM WITH A REAL T.V. KINDA TWIST, REMEMBER? SO YOU'VE BEEN IN A LOT OF THE SCENES!
REALLY?
BUT WAIT! SO I'VE BEEN PART OF A MOVIE WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE? HA! WHY, YOU WILL HEAR FROM MY AGENT!
BUT I AM YOUR AGENT!
YOU'LL HEAR FROM YOU THEN!

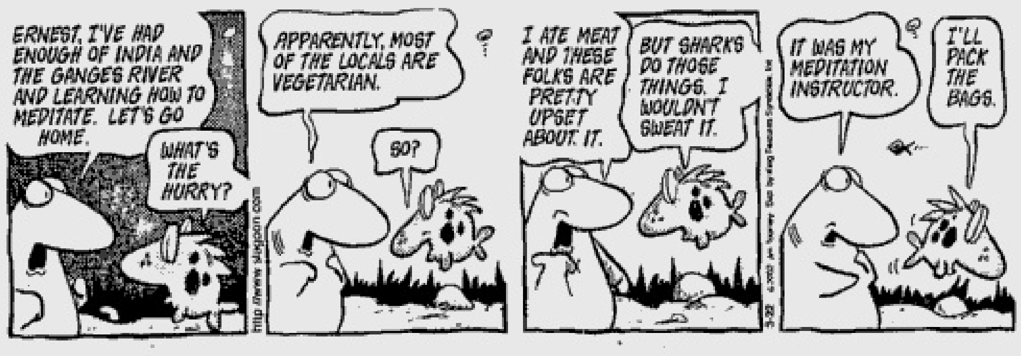
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINOG NA ITONG TAO MO, POLGAS.
PWEDE NA 'YAN!
HINDI PWEDE ITONG SI BRUSKO.
ALAGA KO 'TO E.
BRUSKO?
GANO'N ANG RULE, 'DI BA? PAG PINANGALANAN MO NA 'YUNG TAO MO E HINDI MO NA PWEDENG PULUTANIN.
ETO NA LANG O. PINANGALANAN KO ANG MGA ITONG "SANGGOL" AT "TAO."
PMJR0302

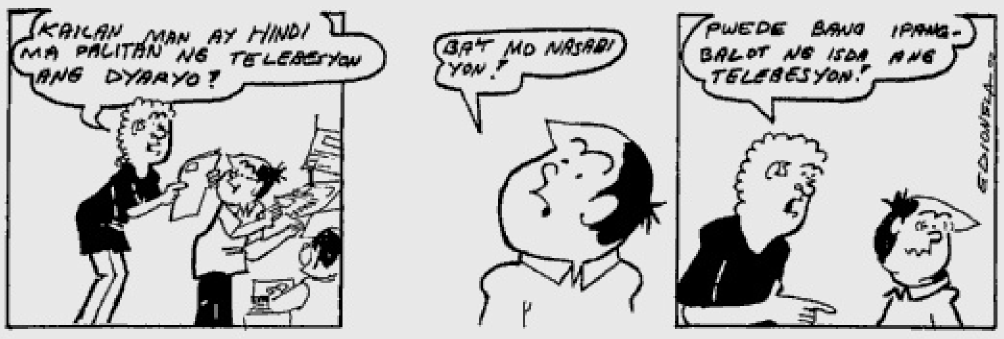
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ERNEST, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF INDIA AND THE GANGES RIVER AND LEARNING HOW TO MEDITATE. LET'S GO HOME.
WHAT'S THE HURRY?
APPARENTLY, MOST OF THE LOCALS ARE VEGETARIAN.
SO?
I ATE MEAT AND THESE FOLKS ARE PRETTY UPSET ABOUT IT.
BUT SHARKS DO THOSE THINGS. I WOULDN'T SWEAT IT.
IT WAS MY MEDITATION INSTRUCTOR.
I'LL PACK THE BAGS.
http://www.slagoon.com
3-22

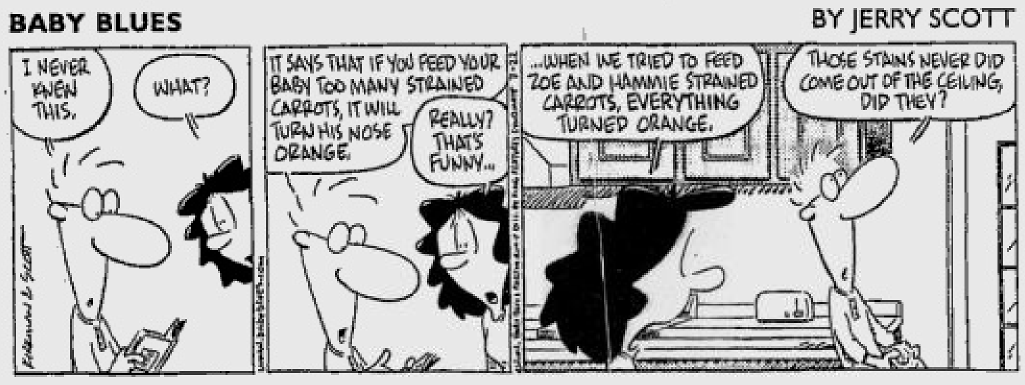
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


KAILAN MAN AY HINDI MA PALITAN NG TELEBESYON ANG DYARYO?
BA'T MO NASABI YON?
PWEDE BANG IPANG-BALOT NG ISDA ANG TELEBESYON?
EDIONELA

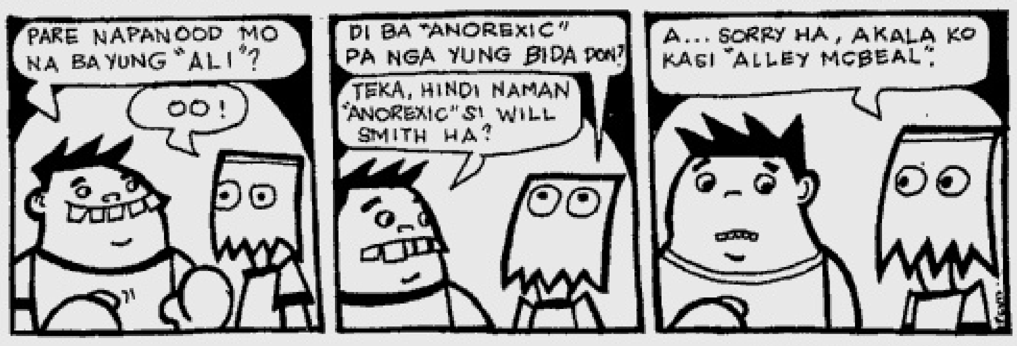
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I NEVER KNEW THIS.
WHAT?
IT SAYS THAT IF YOU FEED YOUR BABY TOO MANY STRAINED CARROTS, IT WILL TURN HIS NOSE ORANGE.
REALLY? THAT'S FUNNY...
...WHEN WE TRIED TO FEED ZOE AND HAMMIE STRAINED CARROTS, EVERYTHING TURNED ORANGE.
THOSE STAINS NEVER DID COME OUT OF THE CEILING, DID THEY?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


PARE NAPANOOD MO NA BA YUNG "ALI"?
OO!
DI BA "ANOREXIC" PA NGA YUNG BIDA DON?
TEKA, HINDI NAMAN "ANOREXIC" SI WILL SMITH HA?
A... SORRY HA, AKALA KO KASI "ALLEY MCBEAL".

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Karl Malden, William Shatner, Bob Costas, Andrew Lloyd Webber

Happy Birthday: Don't overreact or take on too much this year. You just have to learn to gauge yourself and your time a little better. Refrain from spending money you haven't got, especially for big-ticket items. Your numbers are 11, 17, 22, 29, 35, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will have a hard time getting friends and relatives to do things your way today. Make life easy on yourself. If you try to use force you will end up spending time all by yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your interaction with others will lead to new friendships and lots of good times. Consider taking a pleasure trip or at least checking out the possibilities.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Career opportunities are present. Don't hesitate to set up interviews, make cold calls or answer ads in the newspaper. You can up your income if you make a move.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will be emotionally up and down today. Don't be too quick to let others know how you feel. You will be too sensitive to deal with issues that are bothering you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may not be fully aware of all the things going on around you. Keep your eyes and ears open and if you can, do a little investigating of your own.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Love and romance are in the air. If you are in a relationship be sure to make romantic plans. If you are single by all means get out and enjoy the company of like-minded people.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You may be able to talk circles around most but when it comes right down to business you may find yourself a little short of knowledge to argue your point. Don't overreact; back down and learn all you can from those around you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You will find yourself totally engrossed in conversations that are so descriptive and interesting it will be impossible for you to walk away. Mix business with pleasure if possible.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You may be inclined to get involved in a risky venture. Your financial situation will suffer if you expand your interests too quickly. Ask for sound advice from someone you respect and trust.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): If something doesn't go according to plan don't worry about it. Time is on your side and the longer you wait the better. It may be best to back off for the time being.

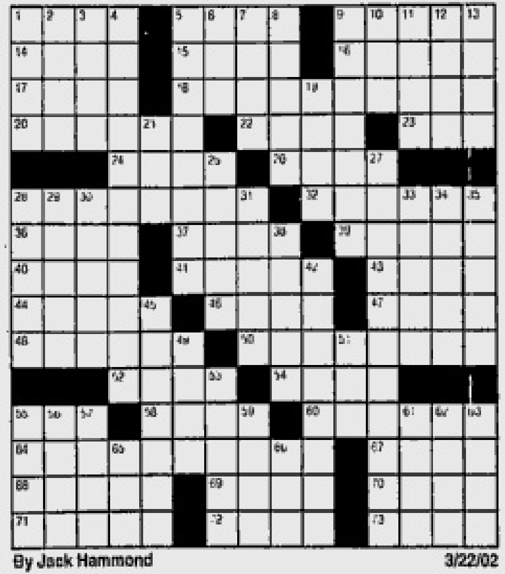
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The best place to put your energy is into your work. Regardless of anything else you should be able to get ahead if you put your mind to it. Don't give in to bad habits just because you are heading into the weekend.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You have to make your plans early today. You should try to do something creative or unusual. You will feel satisfaction from your artistic accomplishments.

Birthday Baby: You are active and in love with life. You are a proud and independent individual. You have high energy, combined with loyalty and kindness. It will be hard for anyone to dislike you.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Jack Hammond
Savannah, GA

3/22/02

ACROSS
1 Kind of trap
5 Prego rival
9 Jewel weight
14 Frankenstein's gofer
15 Jack of oaters
16 By oneself
17 Despotic ruler
18 Northernmost trees around German city?
20 Tennis great Jack
22 Western lily
23 Scoot
24 "__ Brockovich"
26 On or off road
28 Reverie
32 Tilted
36 Concept
37 Medicine bottle
39 Bee without a sting
40 Jewish month
41 Fitzgerald and Grasso
43 Like JFK Airport
44 Military reply
46 Bic's biggest selling pen
47 Glaswegian
48 Pay on demand
50 Curse
52 Small merganser
54 People in "The Time Machine"
55 Bullring cheer
58 Cash drawer slot
60 Gain
64 Swiss city in a sacred place?
67 Sushi wrapping
68 Silly
69 Colorado resort
70 Part of Q.E.D.
71 Like rattan
72 Greek goddess of discord
73 Vegas rival

DOWN
1 Go down
2 Whisky barrel, for one
3 Myrna's role in "The Thin Man"
4 Camels circling Eternal City?
5 Fetch
6 Clay, at birth
7 Pinup's asset
8 Brown pigment
9 Glanced (off)
10 Total
11 Disturb
12 Christie of fiction
13 Abound (with)
19 All the same to Pierre
21 Botch
25 Carpenter's supply
27 Notre Dame congregant?
28 Ross of the Supremes
29 Attachment
30 Rising requirement?
31 Mediterranean republic
33 Time being
34 Study of insects: abbr.
35 Beta follower
38 "Mule Train" singer
42 Surgical tools
45 Bruited about
49 Philadelphia's city hall figure
51 Rocky peak
53 Bob's partner?
55 Of the ear
56 A Turner
57 Israel's Abba
59 Lingering sign of damage
61 Tiger's warning
62 Persia, today
63 Josip Broz
65 Compass pt.
66 IV times XIII

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

A	P	I	S		O	R	C	A		E	J	E	C	T
B	E	N	E		R	O	A	M		R	U	L	E	R
E	T	U	I		E	T	N	A		A	G	I	L	E
L	I	S	Z	T	L	E	S	S		S	H	E	L	F
S	T	E	E	R	S			S	H	E	A			
				A	E	O	N		A	R	N	E	S	S
S	T	R	I	P		M	A	L	I		D	U	N	E
K	E	E	L		C	I	V	I	L		E	R	I	E
I	T	A	L		U	T	E	S		P	L	O	P	S
M	E	M	B	E	R		L	A	M	E				
			E	L	L	A			E	N	A	C	T	S
S	H	E	B	A		H	A	Y	D	N	S	E	E	K
K	A	R	A	T		E	S	A	U		T	A	L	E
A	L	I	C	E		A	I	R	S		I	S	L	E
T	E	C	H	S		D	A	D	A		R	E	S	T

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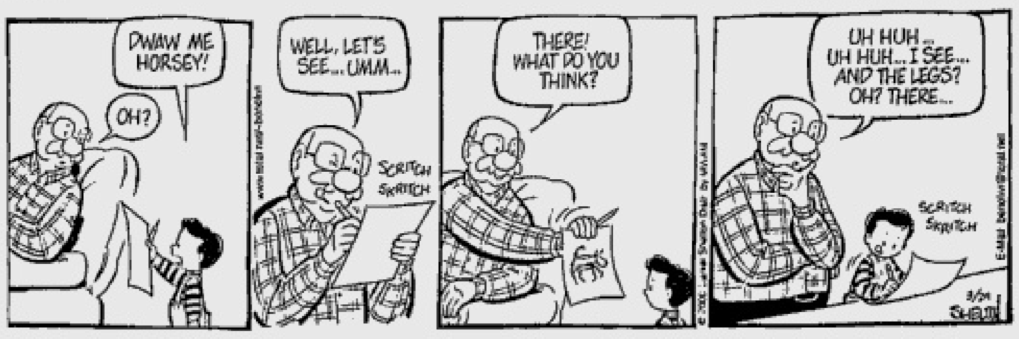
3/22/02

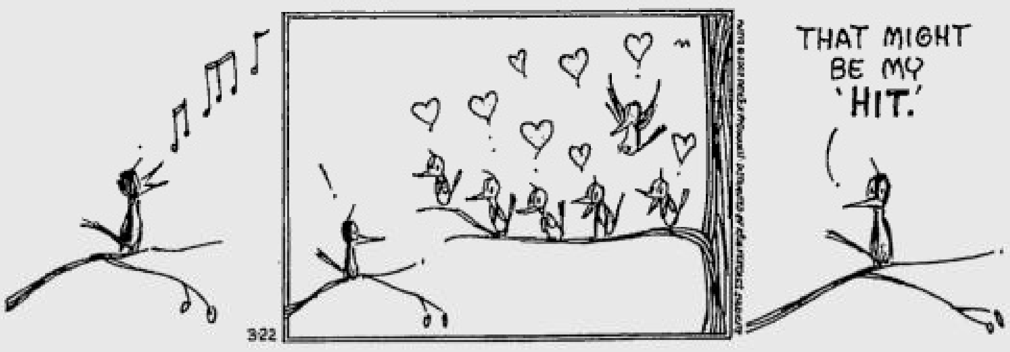
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


DWAW ME HORSEY!
OH?
WELL, LET'S SEE...UMM...
SCRITCH SKRITCH
THERE! WHAT DO YOU THINK?
UH HUH... UH HUH... I SEE... AND THE LEGS? OH? THERE...
SCRITCH SKRITCH
3/21
SHELTON

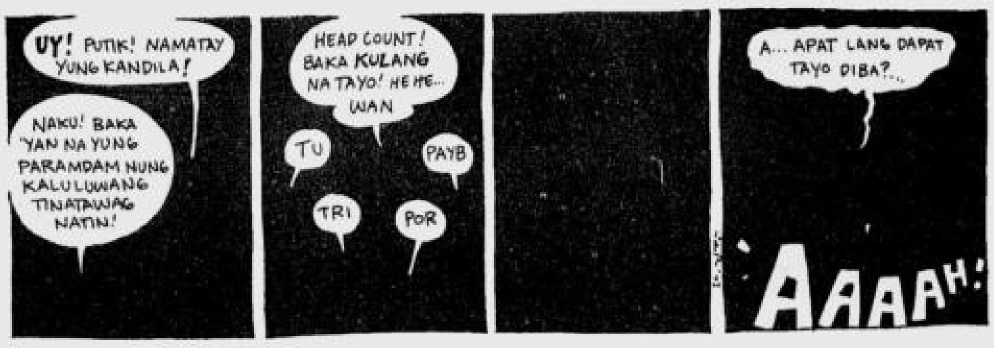
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THAT MIGHT BE MY 'HIT.'
3·22

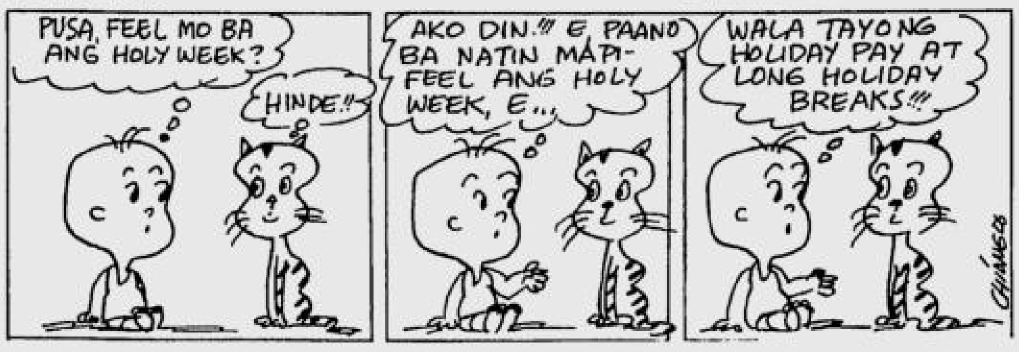
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY! PUTIK! NAMATAY YUNG KANDILA!
NAKU! BAKA 'YAN NA YUNG PARAMDAM NUNG KALULUWANG TINATAWAG NATIN!
HEAD COUNT! BAKA KULANG NA TAYO! HE HE... WAN
TU
PAYB
TRI
POR
A... APAT LANG DAPAT TAYO DIBA?...
AAAAH!

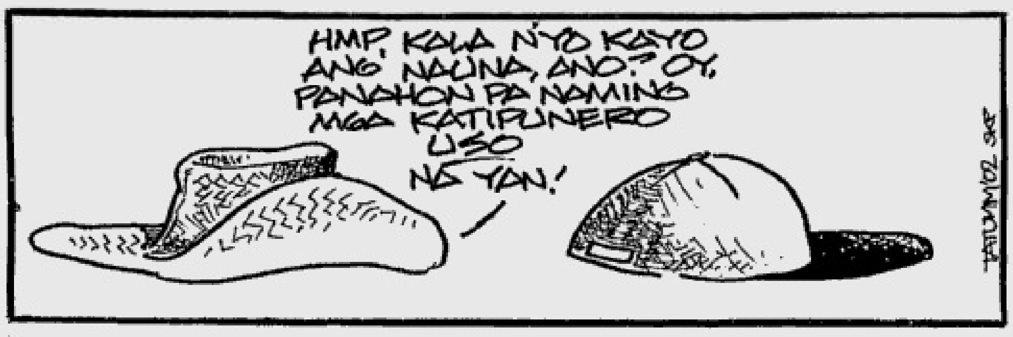
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, FEEL MO BA ANG HOLY WEEK?
HINDE!!
AKO DIN!!! E PAANO BA NATIN MAPI-FEEL ANG HOLY WEEK, E...
WALA TAYONG HOLIDAY PAY AT LONG HOLIDAY BREAKS!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HMP, KALA N'YO KAYO ANG NAUNA, ANO? OY, PANAHON PA NAMING MGA KATIPUNERO USO NA YAN!
TATUM 3/02

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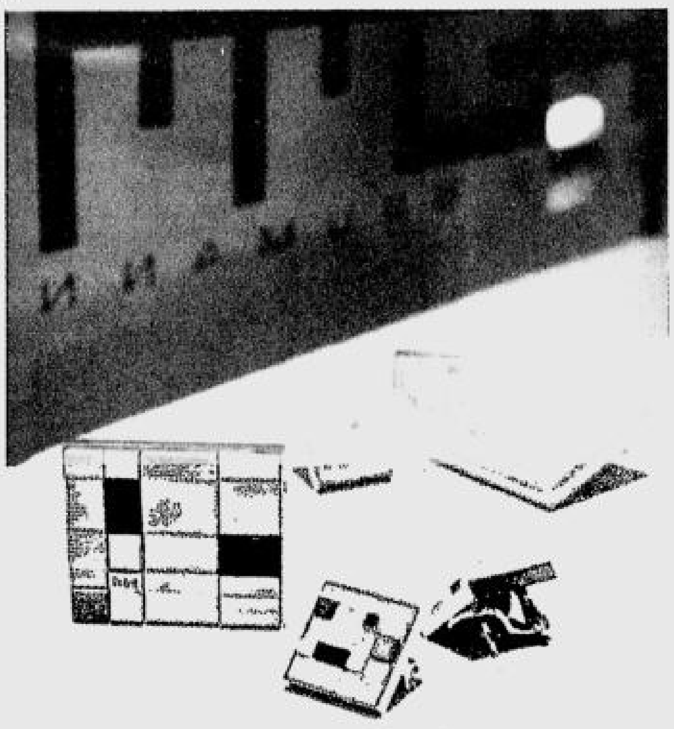
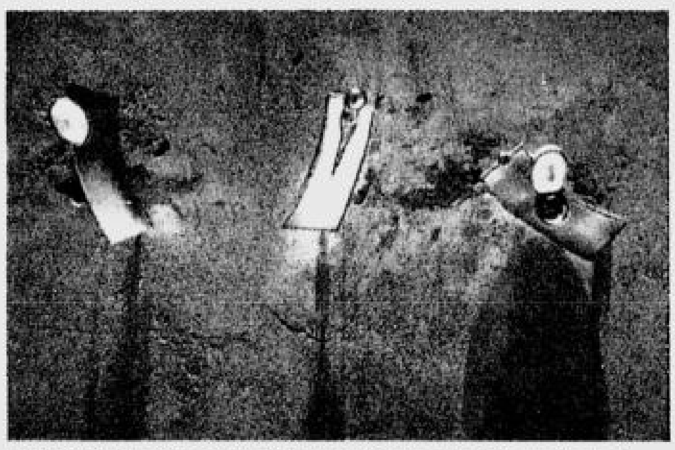
Fine jewelry at budget prices



BROOCHES in yellow gold with keshi pearls and brilliant cut diamonds.

HERMES watch on display

Hans Brumann has introduced a bridge line to widen appreciation for exquisite gem designs



EARRINGS in silver and 18-karat yellow gold with mother-of-pearl and wood

Photos by Chito Vecina
VISUAL CONCEPT BY ALBERT AVELLANA

JEWELER Hans Brumann, known for superior craftsmanship, has a bridge line of sorts with some Filipino partners.

Ever since HEMM opened shop at Rockwell Power Plant, business has been surprisingly brisk because of the pricing strategy. HEMM is the acronym for the owners' names—Hans, Ernie, Maria and Meng. Brumann is the chair of the company; his partners are Ernesto and Ngor (the real name of Meng) Ang of Pinctada Jewelry, and Hans' wife, Maria.

Members of the Jewelers Consortium of the Philippines, Hans Brumann Inc. and Pinctada have been exporting to the United States. Because of the increase in volume, these jewelers are setting up a factory in Taguig called HEMM Corp. With such a facility, the jewelers can expand their businesses.

Brumann heads the design team, composed of Angelino Gabon from his own atelier and Flordeliza Paradi from Pinctado.

Brumann says the sales have exceeded their expectations. He attributes it to the store's design, which is not an intimidating white box surrounded by security guards. Architect Jose Ma. Yupangco designed the store, which is a play on the grid of glass-enclosed shelves and open spaces.

"The concept is about transparency and accessibility. The customer is not afraid to come in," says Brumann. The linear look was inspired by the logo and is interpreted in black and white stainless steel and raw concrete finish.

HEMM targets the yuppies and the upper middle class market. The prices of the jewelry, made under the supervision of no less than Brumann himself, is reasonable at P10,000 to P20,000. The lower-priced items are silver jewelry that start at P1,000.

A rectangular pendant in silver with a sliver of 18 karat yellow gold on top with a rubber neck band costs P4,000. Earrings that resemble squares of white gold with stitch designs on the side, accented with colored stones, costs P10,000 a pair. A pendant that looks like a tube of silver with diagonal strips of gold and encrusted with amethyst costs P3,750.

Brumann explains that the look of the jewelry is characteristically European—lots of metal with a few diamonds.

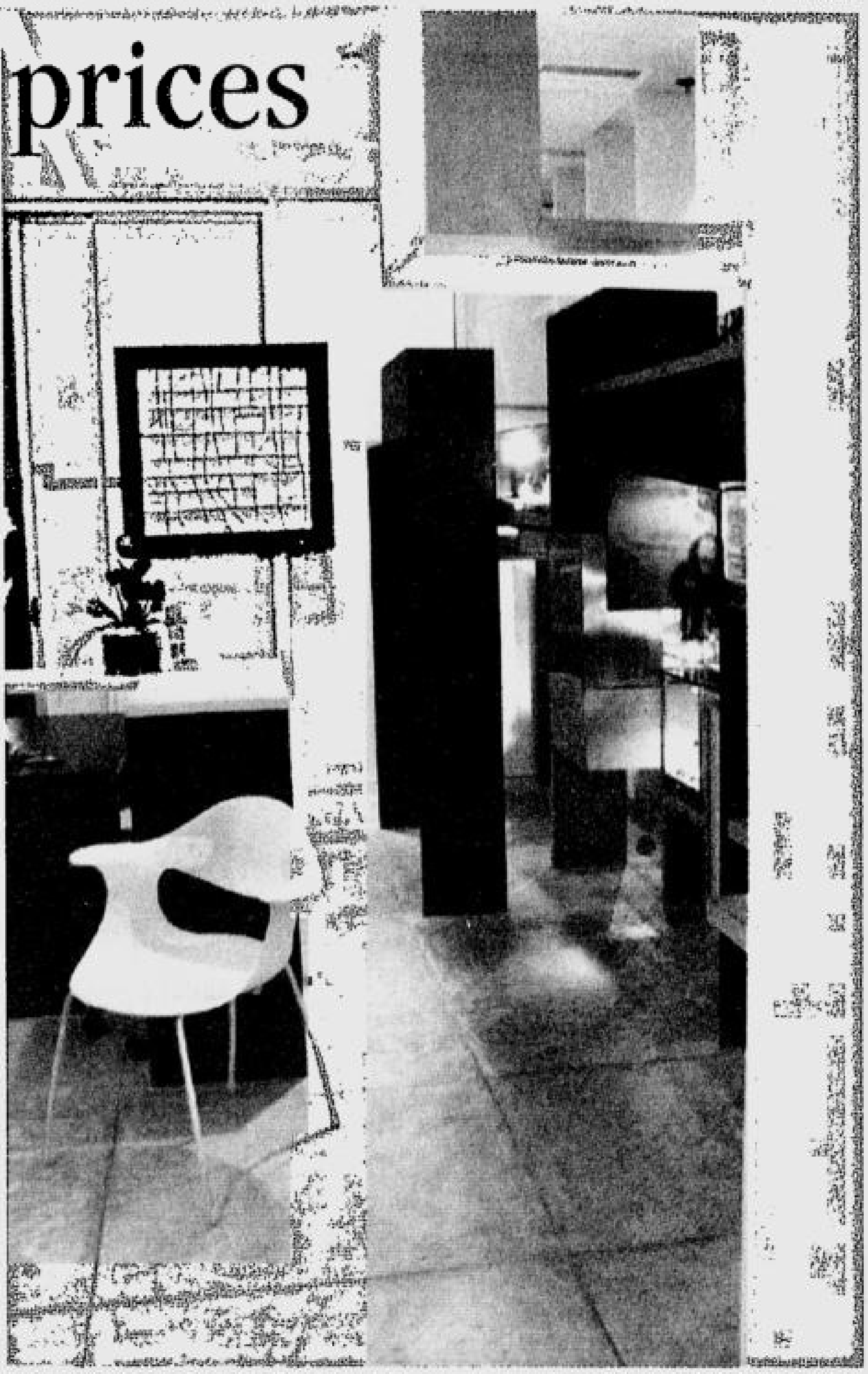
The Swiss jeweler is proud of the finishing. "The corners are sharp and the precious metal is well polished. The jewelry is as shiny as a mirror."

One of his trademarks is the use of South Sea pearls. There is an interesting series of jewelry done in geometric forms and contrasted by the roundness of the black pearls. The metals are also a contrast of rough and smooth finishes. One such design is a square ring, topped off by a gleaming pearl.

"Nobody can make this finishing like us," he declares.

Well, the sales validate the claim.

Marge C. Enriquez



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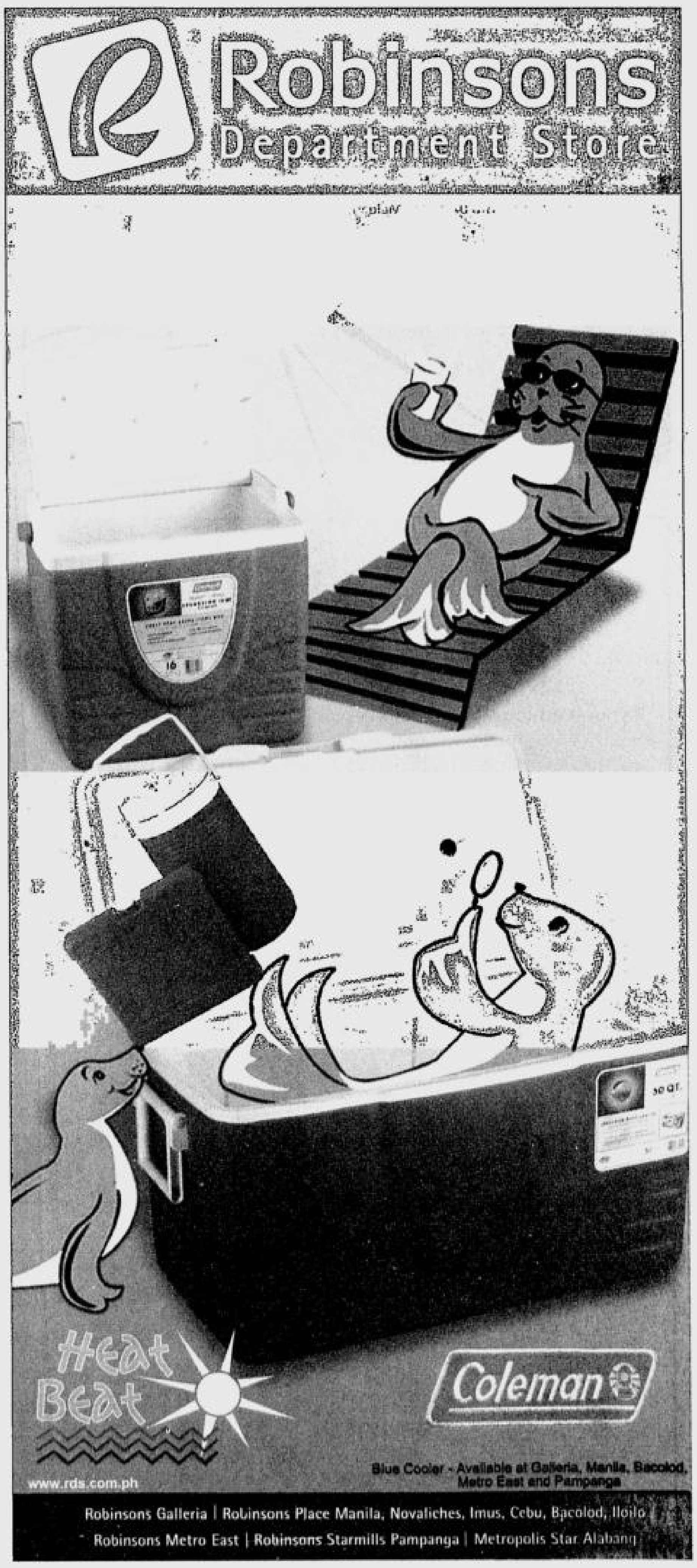
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Stylish and comfortable sneakers

KEDS will unveil its latest shoe line featuring a quartet of style shows on March 23 at the Wasabi Bistro & Sake Bar, Makati Avenue, Makati. Moppet Castro directs the show. Highlights of the event include a four-segment fashion presentation that showcases Keds' various brands: Keds Original, the classic champion oxford and slip-on; Keds Relax, the new range of relaxed, flexible footwear whose design features offer comfort; Keds Sport, fashion sneakers that take their construction cues from sports activities and footwear; and Keds Casual, the laidback leather collection for dressy, casual basics made even more wearable with all its comfort elements.

Keds is available at SM, Robinsons, Cinderella, Landmark, Sta. Lucia East Mall, Planet Sports, The Athletes Foot and Olympic Village.

GOINGS ON

FORUM. The Reading Association of the Phils., a national affiliate of the International Reading Association (IRA), will hold a forum on "Newspapers in Literacy Education" on March 24 at the Social Hall, P. Gomez Elementary School, Sta. Cruz, Manila. The forum coincides with IRA's yearly celebration of "Newspapers in Education" during the month of March and is in keeping with IRA's desire to equip reading teachers with skills in the use of newspapers as resources for teaching and learning activities. The forum will also give an update on IRA's convention in San Francisco in April. All delegates to the convention are enjoined to attend this forum. Call 426-6001 local 7154 or 735-7037.

WORKSHOP. The Center for Arts Foundation Inc. will hold its registration for a free workshop. The workshop is open to all, from ages 6-65 years old. Courses include dance, acting/theater arts and voice lessons. Workshop will start in April. Topics include extensive training in acting, dramatic criticism, improvisation, scene study and thorough studies in Asian and Western Theater. Its culminating activity will be marked by an actual public performance. Call 727-8347. Registration is now going on.

LENTEN ACTIVITIES. A series of Lenten activities will be held at the Quezon Memorial Circle Liwasang Aurora starting Holy Monday until Holy Wednesday, 3-8 p.m. Lenten activities include: Chaplet of Mercy, Series of Rosary, Station of the Cross, Confession and Holy Mass. The traditional Pabasa or Pasyon starts on Maundy Thursday, 8 p.m. onward, until its culmination on Good Friday. This will be highlighted by the Feast of Divine Mercy on April 7. Confession will be 5-7 a.m.

Korea pilgrimage tour discounts

ASIANA Airlines offers an all-new pilgrimage tour through Korea's holy sites. The five-day, four-night tour includes a visit to Naju, the Blessed Mother's House where the visionary Julia Kim witnessed the image of the Blessed Virgin Mother shed blood and tears for 700 days, and the Holy Mountain.

After an overnight stay at Kwangju City, the tour moves on to Chongju City.

Returning to Seoul, visitors will visit Lotte World Adventure and Magic Island. Day Four includes a shopping expedition to Dongdaemun Fashion Market.

Asiana also offers a shopping spree through Holy Week. The tour starts with a stay at Itaewon, Seoul's English-speaking shopping district with about 1,800 stores. The tour then moves to Dongdaemun Fashion Market.

The tours start March 28. Call Asiana Airlines at 892-5681 to 88.

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Per DTI-Laguna Permit No. 01-020 Series of 2002
Park Schedule: From March 20 to June 23: Wednesday to Friday, 2pm-10pm. Saturday, Sunday and holidays, 10am-10pm, with fireworks display at 9pm. The Park will also be open on Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday. Closed on Holy Thursday and Good Friday but will re-open on Black Saturday and Easter Sunday. For inquiries, please call 8302111 to 17 or 8436073 to 78. Makati Sales Office: Amtrust Leisure Corporation, G/F Tropical Palms Condominium, De la Rosa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City • Park Address: Enchanted Kingdom, San Lorenzo South, Sta. Rosa, Laguna • Email: enchant@itextron.com

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LIFESTYLE

Trend Spotting

THE LATE racing champion Arthur Tuason coaching his son Jean-Pierre in a karting race in JRC circuit, Libis

Eat his dust

Oxygen endorser J.P. Tuason is driving the race of his life: Raising awareness of and raising funds for Formula car racing in the Philippines

By Marge C. Enriquez
Photos by Wahoo Guerrero

FORMULA car racer Jean-Pierre "J.P." Tuason observes that when he's in a meeting or out to woo sponsors, he is judged by his car, watch and shoes.

But when he's not on the Formula 3 or on a kart, Tuason prefers his Ford pick-up for everyday use. "It's more relaxing," he says. For his interview with INQUIRER, he sports a Tag Hauer watch, one of his sponsors, and is shod in Kenneth Cole shoes.

But this interview isn't about the brands mentioned. Tuason is endorsing Oxygen's

EAT/ P.E2

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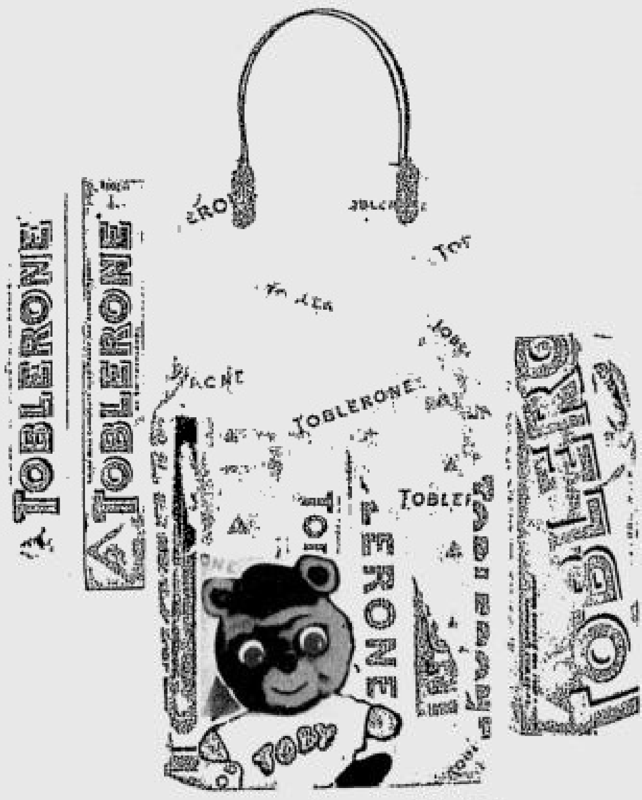

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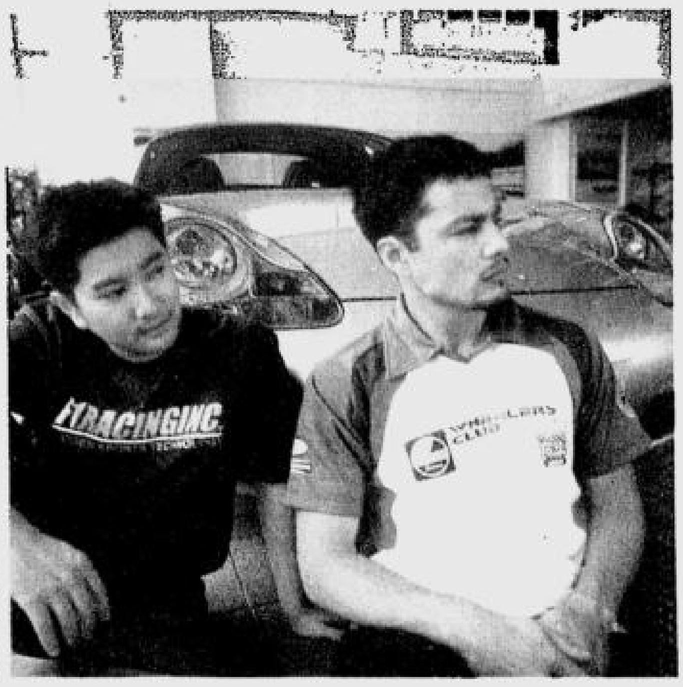

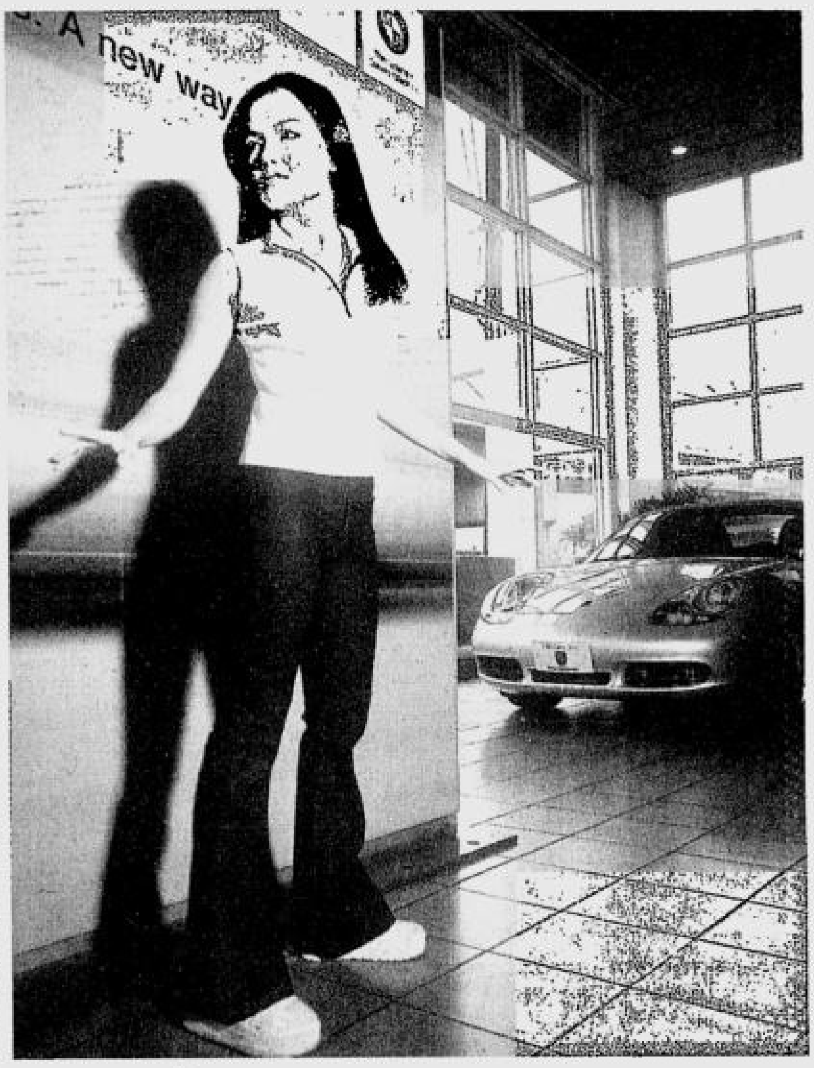

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Eat his dust

From page E1

formula racing line, which is in the stores this summer. The look is timely since the country has increasingly taken an interest on formula racing. The sporty look coincides with the Asian Formula 3 Challenge, which starts on April 6 and 7 in Batangas. The race moves to China in May and June, Malaysia in July and August, Korea on September and back to the Philippines in Subic on Oct. 26 and 27. Although Tuason has raced in China and in Japan, this will be his first-ever circuit.

"There will be 30 cars of different classes that will be on the grid. Every time you win, you score points. At the end of its series, whoever gains the most points is the champion. That's what we're gunning for," says Tuason.

Like father, like son

It may seem like the 27-year-old sportsman is a chip off the old block. Like his late father, Arthur Tuason, he learned to steer the wheel even before he could walk. The elder Tuason, Pocholo Ramirez and Dante Silverio were the top racers in the '70s. At that time the Philippines was one of the first to organize Formula 3 cars. When the Philippine economy nosedived in the '80s, the sport nearly died.

Arthur and his family migrated to Vancouver, Canada. When Asia became a tiger economy, the Tuasons returned to the Philippines in 1996. The elder Tuason started racing again until he died of leukemia at the young age of 50. Carrying on the family tradition, J.P. eventually went into formula racing.

"I was trained by my father. I raced for 14 years with and against him," he recalls. Asked who won the races, the younger Tuason said he obediently back up like an airplane wing man in deference to his father.

Growing up around cars, Tuason inevitably got into racing. At 13, he was racing against his father in go-kart. Then the sport progressed to Rally and Formula cars.

Tuason explains that the Formula 3 car is smaller than the F-1 car. "The car is made of a hundred percent carbon fiber and kevlar that make it light and strong. It's got aerodynamic wings for better cornering. We use full slick tires for grip. It's got an open cockpit with no windscreen. You're head is sticking out of the car. There are no fenders to protect you," he explains.

Funding challenge

It's a faster car and also more dangerous. However, Tuason practices the prudence of his father. The elder Tuason would always remind his son, "Make sure you don't go over your limits."

Actually, it's even more perilous to drive on Edsa. "It's very safe on the race track because it's a controlled environment. There are only a few of you. When you're on Edsa and you're speeding away, somebody can come out of nowhere and kill you," he says.

Tuason believes that as a sportsman he has to be role a model for road safety and courtesy. "If you're a race car driver and you're reckless, people will look at you negatively."

Keeping fit is a fraction of the challenge: Tuason's major hurdle is funding the sport. Practicing for the Formula 3 race is very expensive as it requires a mechanical crew to check the equipment and make sure there are no mechanical glitches.

Even the sports apparel is costly. "In a Formula 1 or 3 car, your head is out of the cockpit. There's no windscreen, nothing. The lenses that cover your face are like your windshield. If you crash at 200 km/hour, that's the only thing that protects your head. We have a specially made helmet. The price ranges from P30,000-70,000. If there's a small crack, we have to get a replacement," he says.

THE WET LOOK

J.P. Tuason with his father and younger brother Michael in Carmona, Cavite in 1992

These drivers wear racing shoes designed to grip the pedal that cost P10,000. The undershirts and shorts are fire retardant and cost P2,000 each.

Tuason is superstitious. He wears a pair of racing shoes his father bought him and has it covered with duct tape.

He says it's harder to raise money than to race cars.

Is it harder to court sponsors than a woman? "Definitely. I've had more girlfriends than sponsors," he says.

To keep the sport alive, corporate sponsorship is needed. Companies such as Golden ABC, which produces the fashion-forward label Oxygen, and Magic Station 89.9 FM have been supporting the team.

Bright

"The prospect of formula racing is bright. The awareness is just starting there. It can only succeed if companies will back it up. That's how the PBA has evolved. If companies come in, the sport will grow. If it is shown on TV, and a lot of people will watch, there will be association. Without the support of the big companies, formula racing will be just a rich guy's sport," says Tuason.

To sustain the interest in the sport, his company, Tuason Racing Project, is opening a racing school this April. It will be launched with Oxygen at the Trans Show at the SM Mega Trade Hall on April 6.

The classes will be held in Batangas. "Enthusiasts can get a taste of what it's like to be in the sport without having to buy a sports car or spending P400,000 to set it up. For a minimal fee, we will teach them how to get into it safely and racing skills," says Tuason.

The minimum requirement is a national driver's license.

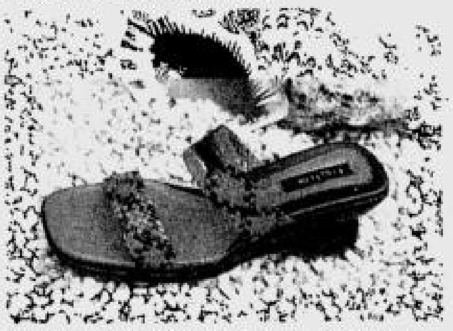
"We don't teach *cambio* or how to stay at the right side of the road. The course includes an introduction to our cars, the setups, the safety equipment, helmets. We will teach people the racing line and how to down shift or up shift. We will be racing at the Batangas circuit on an international standard. It is 3.6 kilometers long. It's a one-day experience where you do 30 laps in a race car," he says.

The school is giving free life insurance, courtesy of its sponsor, Standard Insurance Co., to participants. "If you get hurt, we'll pay you," he says.

For details, call the Tuason Racing Project (630 Boni Ave., Mandaluyong City) at 531-2962 or call Jeanette Tuason at (0917) 527-2963

Summer shoes big on texture

TEXTURE is what Figlia ladies shoes are about this summer. Beautiful yet durable comfort styles will deliver on their feel-good claims. Colors are predominantly white and black, with refreshing splashes of green and blue. Figlia summer 2002 collection also features weaves and braids with rosette and butterfly accents. Contrast stitching, peek-a-boo cutouts and fun details make even the most traditional silhouettes very sexy indeed.



RED and navy blue kidskin leather woven slip-on slide on a black double wedge moulded sole and comfy footbed

DENIM and tan three-strap summer slide on light Italian polyurethane welted sole and ultra-soft footbed

Erratum

In last Friday's pictorial with the Filipino Designers Group, Lulu Tan-Gan designed the knit ensemble (right) and Loretto (below) created the evening gown.

At the Ladies' Shoes Department

JANEO

Denim slides with multi-colored inner soles

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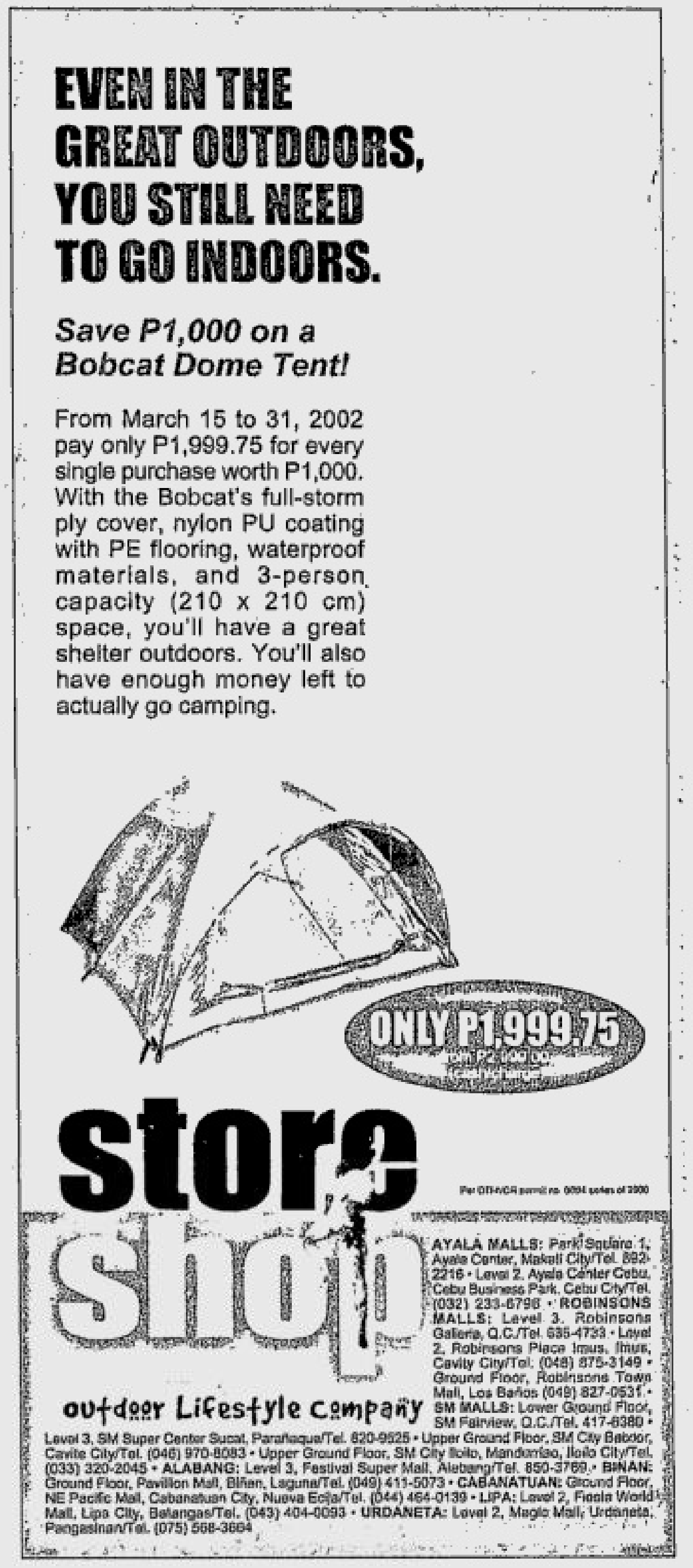

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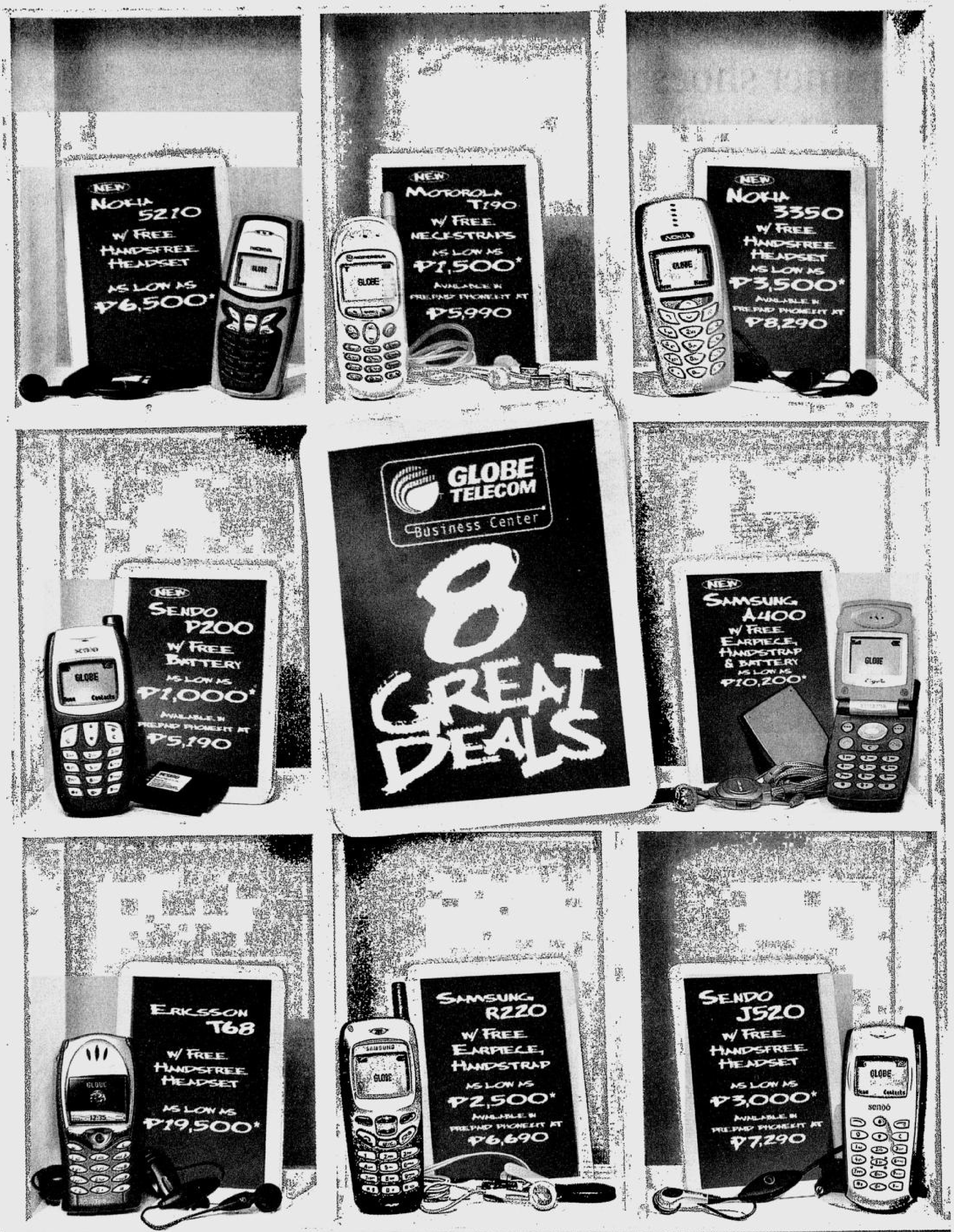
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LIFESTYLE

Home

SEEMINGLY sculpted into the terrain, large slabs of stone and concrete create an engaging pathway down the lakeshore.

Gateway to greenery

STORY ON PAGE F5

Ms. COOKIE CAMILING GAMIAO, wife of Mr. Allan Gamiao and daughter of LTG GREGORIO M CAMILING JR AFP and Mrs. Emma E. Camiling recently passed the California State Board licensure examinations for Nursing given last January 24, 2002 in the State of California. She also passed the Board Examinations for Nursing in Manila in December 1993.

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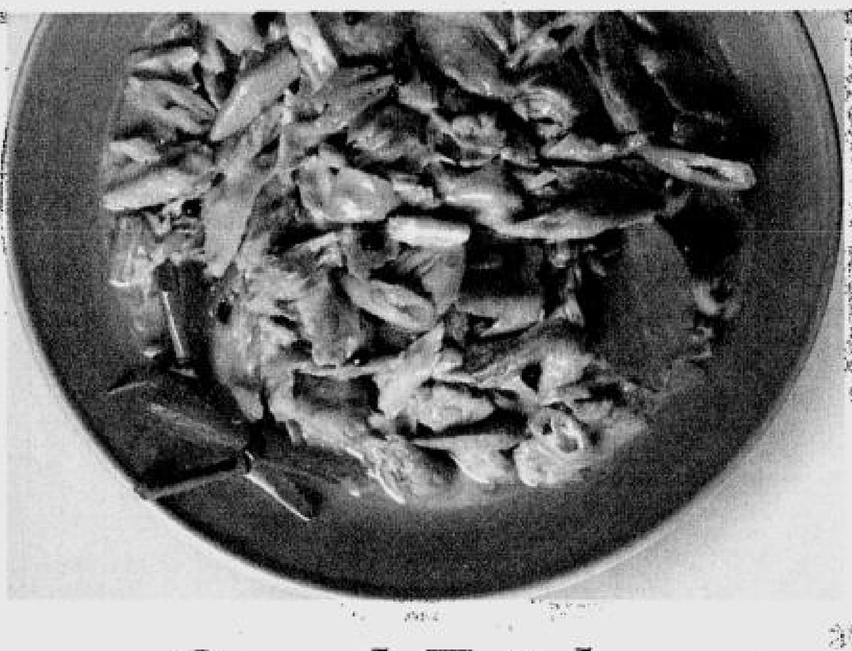

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Procedure:
In a bowl, marinate tuna in vinegar, soy sauce, 2 tablespoons garlic, peppercorns and bayleaf. Leave for 30 minutes. Drain and reserve marinade. In a pan, heat oil from tuna and brown the remaining garlic. Add tuna and cook for a minute. Add the marinade, cook uncovered until liquid is reduced in half. Pour in the coconut cream and cook for a minute. Makes 6 servings.

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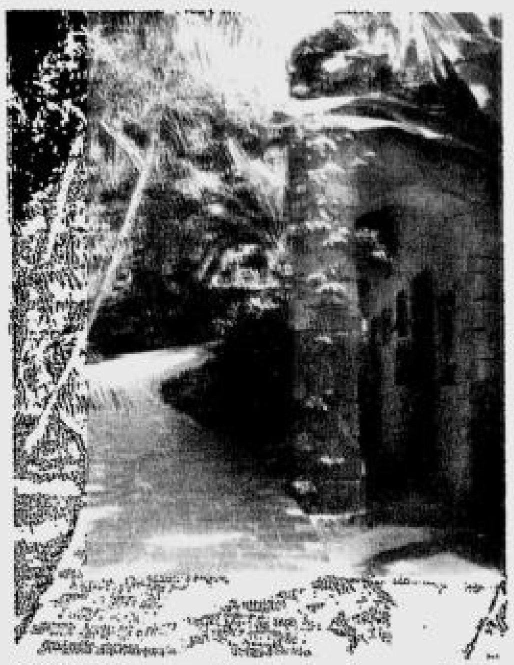
AURACARIAS are best suited to high altitude, requiring ample space.

THE SPLENDID giant fern, the *angiopteris evicta*, and *begonia rex* on the right

TOWERING palms and lush foliage



CLIMBING plants soften hard surfaces and add charm.

Dominican garden is a monument to the soul

By Adrian Lizares
Contributor
Photos by Chito Vecina
PHOTO CONCEPTS BY ALBERT AVELLANA

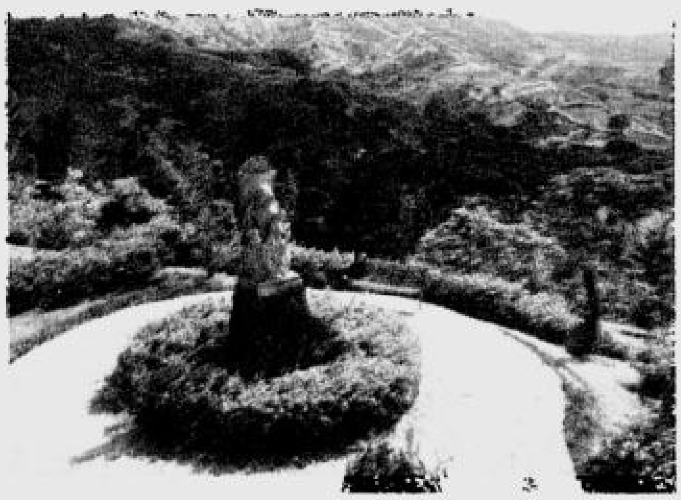
THE FURLED fiddlehead of the giant fern

THE SIGHTS of Calaruega

STAUNCH Catholics will observe Lent in prayer and meditation—in short, in true Catholic tradition, quite a spectacle and a feast in itself. For contemplation and soul-searching, many are flocking to Calaruega, the famous retreat house built by the Dominican friars in Batulao, Batangas.

It is easy to see why the place has become a favorite of the altarbound. Not only does Calaruega have a beautiful chapel (approximating the church in the real Caluruega in Spain, birthplace of St. Dominic de Guzman), it also has a garden perfect for receptions. But the real virtue of the garden is that it is conducive to prayer and meditation. The garden shows how nature works—by inducing peace so that one gets in touch with the soul and the universe.

FERNS, bromeliads and palms leading up to the Transfiguration Chapel



THE MADONNA and Child surrounded by nature

The contemplative effect is immediately felt when you step into Calaruega. The mission-style architecture that quietly greets you is set amid gardens and plants that could very well be the Garden of Eden itself. Except there is no Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil with serpents to tempt you into wrongdoing. Several building serving different functions are nestled in lush vegetation and a surprising variety of plants.

The Dominican friars had acquired the property from the late Vicente Puyat and his family in 1994. Construction followed immediately and was completed the following year. Presently there are three Dominican friars assigned to manage Calaruega.

Hip friars

I went to Fr. Jeffrey Balde, O.P. to find out how he grows his garden. I had expected to meet a friar donned in the famous Dominican with its fashionable layered, flowing look, but instead I met somebody in his track shoes and Oakley sunglasses, with a cigarette in hand, a rather jolly fellow who gave us the freedom to explore the Calaruega garden. The retreat complex is set on the slopes of the Batulao hills overlooking Batangas farmlands and the South China Sea in the far distance. The view is quite exhilarating, enhanced by the garden itself.

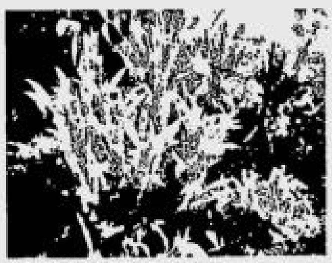
Fr. Edmond Nantes, O.P. conceptualized the garden and its overall layout. The wide selection plants gives a tropical feel to the Spanish-Moorish architecture. In true conservationist fashion, the contour of the land was preserved, including the trees that were existing when the property was acquired. The smart selection of plants that adapt well to the climate and altitude make the garden picture-perfect.

Many of the plants under the full glare of the sun are very floriferous, providing a great show the whole year round. Since the land extends to the low parts of the hillside, species that are well suited for such low altitude are planted there. Of course, palms and colorful bougainvilleas add that Mediterranean flavor. (I sound like I am speaking of a resort, but in a way Calaruega could very well be one.) Higher altitude plants like the Auracarias are planted near the Transfiguration Chapel, which is located at the topmost part of the complex. These evergreens are the same plants that fall victim to unwise use by being planted under the MRT.

Blossoms and prayers

Fragrant blossoms surround the statue of the Virgin holding a crystal rosary and serenely looking into that blessed landscape. At this highest area, benches surround Our Lady's statue where one can sit, relax, perhaps reflect and pray. Colorful and variegated plant species meant for the shade are tucked into what are otherwise "dark" corners. The hard features of the buildings are softened by clinging vines with such old-fashioned names as *ayer, hoy, y mañana*—climbing clerodendrons, which change their floral shape and color depending on their development. What impressed me most are the giant ferns, the *angiopteris evicta*, with their sensuous fiddleheads that emerge into towering fronds. All must have this fern in their gardens.

THE BULBOUS trunk of the champagne palm



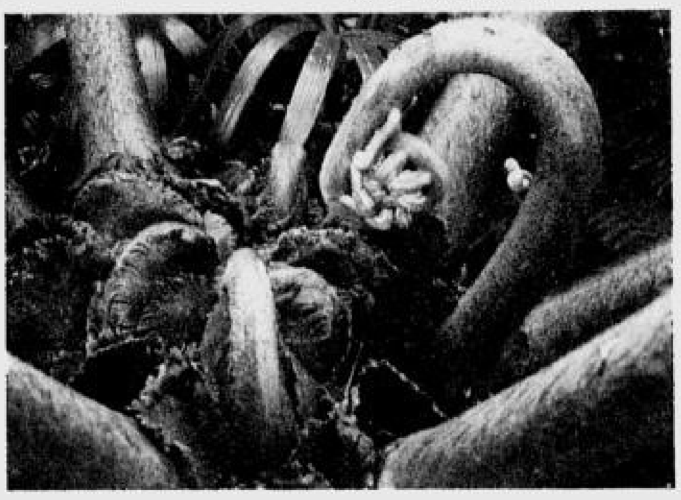
A VARIETY of *Justicia cydonlifolia*, commonly found around the country

The plants are always neat. The first time I sneaked into Calaruega all the potted plants were impatiently in full bloom. On the day I went to see Father Jeffrey, it was the turn of the hydrangeas. The plants are forever looking healthy. It helps that there are 12 gardeners tending this piece of paradise.

The friars are not stopping there. They want to increase their collection by acquiring more specimens. Most of the whole complex is pretty much photo-ready, and we hope you enjoy the photographs here of this most splendid garden of contemplation. In this place, there's no agony in the garden.

Calaruega shows how the Dominicans and the other great missionary orders of the Church have influenced and molded cultures. In their apostolic activities, they show that the way to the soul is through nature and nurture. The search for meaning is greatly aided by peaceful and beautiful surroundings. Calaruega shows how art and natural beauty can inspire the soul to reach greater heights.

E-mail the author at campoman @yahoo.com



PREHISTORIC-LOOKING fiddleheads of the *angiopteris evicta*

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Way of the Cross, environmental style

Text and photos by Tita V. Giron
Contributor

COSMIC journey is how the sisters of Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary call the meditative trek through the 14 stations of the birth of the earth. In place of the different passions of Christ reflected on 14 Stations on the Way of the Cross, there are symbolic gardens at the sanctuary where folks come to meditate on the sufferings of the earth.

It's a quiet place in an off-the-beaten path up there in Baguio where the old convent and school of Maryknoll Sisters stood before it was destroyed by the memorable earthquake of July 16, 1990. The stone walls of the sisters' kitchen are the only remnants of the convent built in 1920.

Bamboos, *alnus* and Benguet pine trees, no doubt descendants of native trees that towered over the convent, line the paths of sanctuary, now a place for meditation, studies on spirituality and conferences on ecology and arts.

After the earthquake, the sisters redirected their educational endeavors toward environmental education for the general public. There's a small school at present for children with multiple disability and hearing impairment. The youngest are 2-year-olds with hearing defect.

"We feel our connection to the passion of Christ this Lent in the suffering of the earth. At no other time has it been more fragile than now," explained Sr. Ann Braudis, director of the sanctuary. Disabled children personify the earth's fragility, she added, "They are most vulnerable to earth suffering."

Cosmic journey

Parallel to the Way of the Cross at Catholic churches, there are 14 cosmic stations in Baguio's meditative earth sanctuary. These are called Universe Comes into Being, Planet Earth Emerges, Oceans are the Birthplace for Life, Dinosaurs on the Scene, Mammals Arrive, Birds Take Flight, the Flowers Spread, Primates Come Forth, Early Humans Live in Caves, Hunting and Gathering Age, Village Period, Earth Gives Sweet Water, Earth's Religious Tradition and Bio-Shelter.

We took the cosmic trek with Sister Ann explaining the various stations laid out on the hilly terrain that is typical of Baguio. At the first station, she lighted a candle on top of a rock.

BELL sound reminds humans to take care of the earth.

COSMIC trek to meditation gardens

STATION symbolizes ocean as birthplace of life on earth.

CHAPEL of Bio-Shelter

SR. Ann Braudis lights primeval fireball to symbolize earth beginnings.

"We think this is how the universe began. In the fireball are seeds of beginnings where emerged potentials for everything."

The hewn pieces of rocks and stone on which the candle stood have evidently been in the area when the first sisters established the convent. It is under the shade of pine trees and shielded from strong winds by calliandra trees.

We passed the ruins of an old kitchen, the only thing that was left of the convent after the earthquake. It is now called environmental theater.

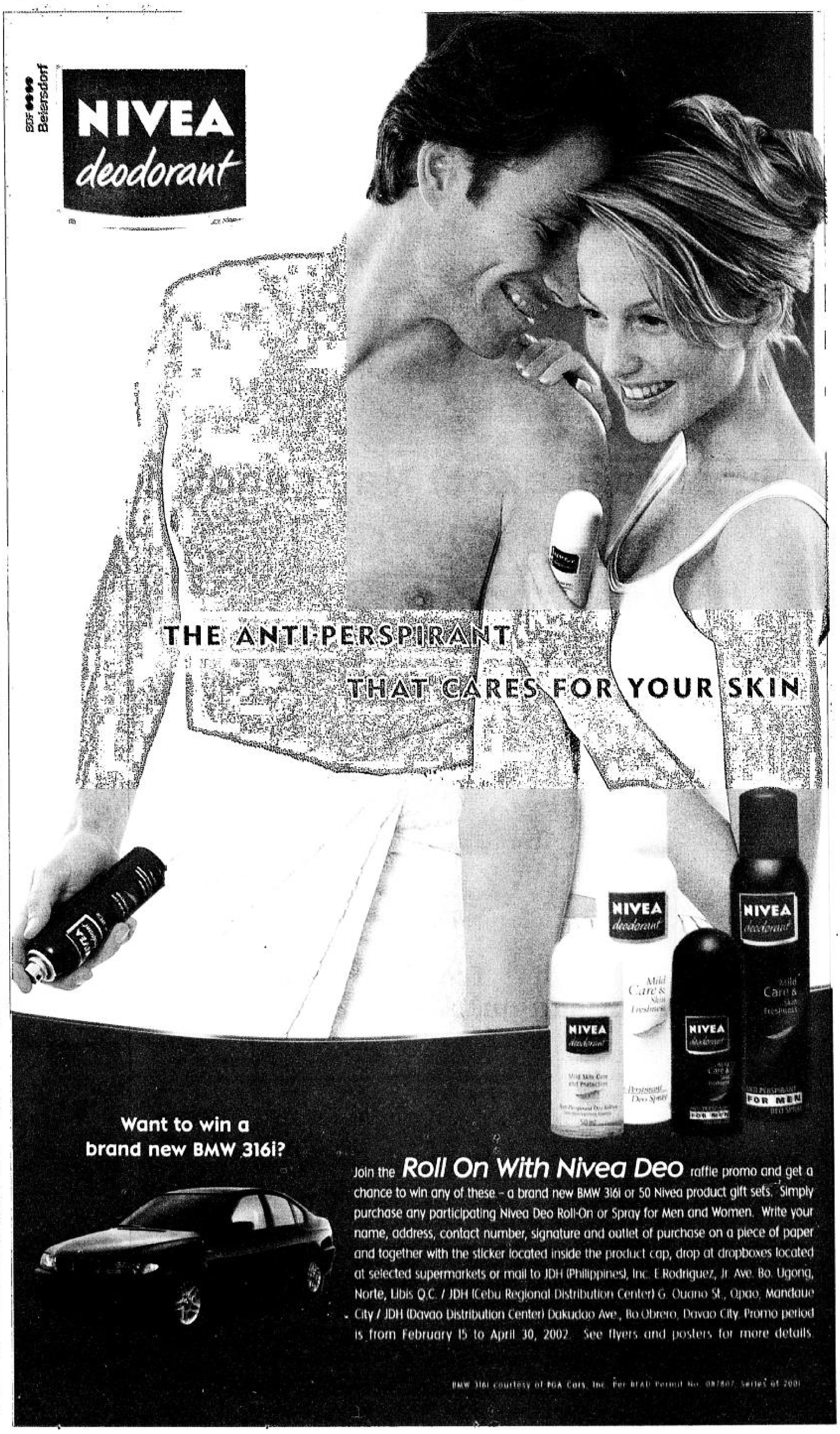
Sister Ann stopped before a bell enshrined under a concrete arch. "Every time you hear the bell, be reminded to take care of the earth," she said. Inscribed at the base of the structure was the message "We are the earth, the people, plants and animals, the breath of the forest and the flow of the sea."

Cave and water

For sure the most beautiful spot on the hills was the ninth station called The Early Humans Live in Caves. It was a replica of the Tabon Cave

WAY/ P.F4

FAMOUS Latin-American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez (center, seated) has written books on liberation technology.



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BMW 316i courtesy of PGA Cars, Inc. Per BFAD Permit No. 087807, Series of 2001

Way of the Cross, environmental style

The 'cosmic journey' at the Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary has attracted pilgrims, Gustavo Gutierrez among them

From page F3

from late stone age. On exhibit was a set of primitive pottery. "We are trying to bring back the ancient art of pottery with this hand molded and fired samples," Sister Ann explained.

"The Tabon Cave," Sister Ann pointed out, "is important to our human formation and one of the most important phases was here in the Philippines. Of all the Tabon Cave complex, this particular cave had a beautiful view of the sun at sunset."

Sister Ann showed off the organic garden where plants and trees grow lush without chemicals. "These get water from the rains, the mist, dew and the natural spring in the area."

TABON Cave exhibits primitive pottery.

Sister Ann disclosed that not too long ago, two Texans insisted that there was a gold mine in the ground. They drilled the rocks and hit a vein. But what came out was water instead of gold.

Famous visitor

A pleasant surprise greeted us at the next station where a famous author and his entourage were resting. It was the respected author Gustavo Gutierrez, who wrote several books about Liberation Theology.

The author, according to Sister Ann, was the first one to articulate the idea of liberation technology, "a different way within the Catholic Church which believes that God really wants people on earth to be liberated from all kinds of slavery." Gutierrez has written magnificent books about the subject, said Sister Ann.

"It's about time we liberated ourselves from slavery of all kinds." She added that Asian liberation technology was right away accepted in the Philippines.

"We call our house the Bio-Shelter to express our vision to live harmoniously with the earth and with the Divine Being," our guide said. Based on the Ifugao concept, the sisters made a special structure with a square at the base and a high triangle roof... Below the triangle is the sacred place, obviously the chapel.

An Ibaloi prayer is prominently displayed and reprinted on fliers handed to guests. The prayer ends with the phrase, "We are saddened by those who unclothe our mountains and carry away the wealth of our lands. Grant us strength to defend our environment."

For more information on the sanctuary, call Mary Jane Foy-os or Nenita Francisco at (074) 442-4602.

E-mail author at mariettagiron@hotmail.com

Plant sale at Eastwood City opens April 12

A WIDE variety of plants, plant arts, gardening supply and tools will be on sale April 12-21, at "Gardenscape," Eastwood City Walk in Libis, QC.

Available at value-for-money prices are a wide variety of orchids, ornamentals, fruit trees, birds, bonsai, dishgardens terrariums, mini-waterfalls, among others.

Plant growers and landscapers who have confirmed their participation are Blooms Avenue, Floral Designs, Flower Cart, Genesis, Greensspell, Harbest, Mabuhay Orchids, Turtleship Trading, Mett's Plant Art, Purificacion Orchids, Yalan Trade and Valesol Haven, among others.

Lecture-demonstrations on the different aspects of gardening will also be held. On April 13, C.V. Lazaro of Los Baños will discuss orchid culture for profit, while plant art expert Serapion S. Metilla will demonstrate how to make an eco-friendly mini waterfall on April 20.

A floral arranging competition will be conducted on April 14 at 2-6 p.m. by the Floral Arts and Crafts Design Center headed by Pearl Banaag. Dubbed "Rosa, Gardenia, Calla, atb. Pa," the competition is divided into two—for amateur florists and for the professionals. Those interested to join should register not later than April 8 at FACDCI, 6-C Doña Juan Rodriguez Ave., QC or at Casa Flores de Belen, Madison Building, Pasay Road, Makati City. Materials will be provided free. Call 725-8086, 722-8644 or 814-0847 or telefax 411-1466 and 893-9626.

For inquiries on booth reservation, call MEET Inc. at 436-6580 and 426-0093.

Silverio art show at Glorietta

DANTE Silverio is showing until today his latest works in oil at the Glorietta Art Center in Makati. "Scented Serenades 2" features Silverio's latest landscapes, still lifes and portraits. The landscapes take their inspiration from Fernando Amorsolo and Claude Monet. The still lifes show Silverio's facility in color, light and shadow. The portraits show Silverio's deft handling of brushwork. Call 729-7925 or 752-8049.

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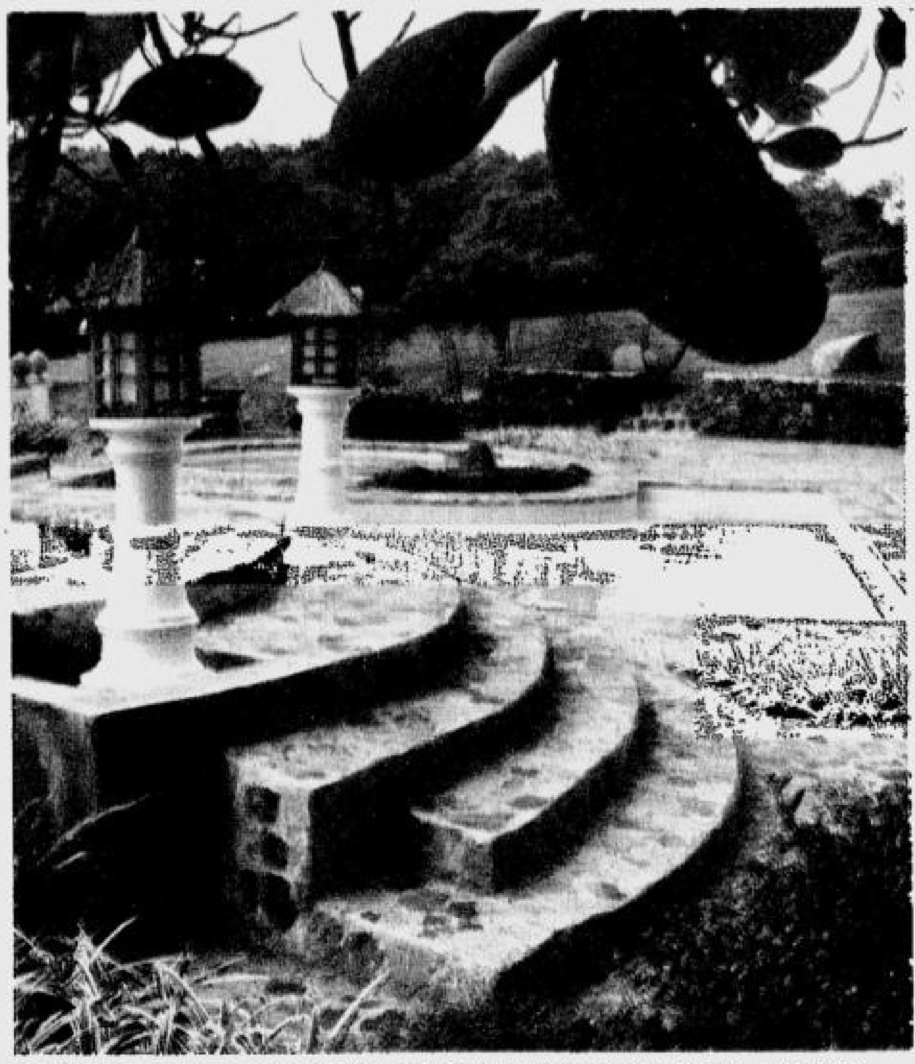
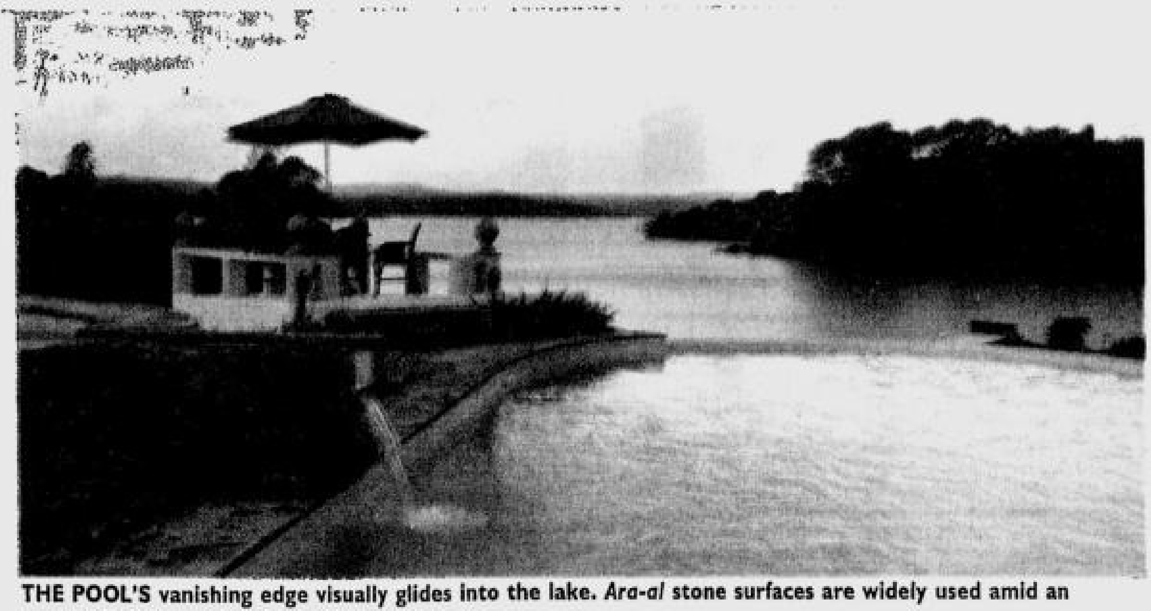


FRUIT trees dot most corners of the 1½-hectare estate of Porta Verde. A Japanese garden lamp, fusion-style, defines the steps up the outdoor Jacuzzi.



THE POOL'S vanishing edge visually glides into the lake. *Ara-al* stone surfaces are widely used amid an assembly of river stone boulders.

Gateway to greenery

By Cathy Saldana-Nolido
Contributor
Photos by Chito Vecina
VISUAL CONCEPT BY ALBERT AVELLANA

PORTA Verde is a stunning leisure and vacation home that basks in the sunlight. It is one of a few villas owned and rented out by Asia Leisure Escapes, with Emma Imperial at the helm.

Porta Verde is located in the south of Caliraya Lake, a 2½-hour drive from the heart of Manila. Blessed by nature and enhanced by man, Porta Verde's environment is a spread of water and skies, with silhouettes of trees clustered in the horizon. The terrain rolls on all sides, cradling a variety of palms and fruit-bearing trees. There is not a spot of land that has not been touched by nature's fertile wand. Pristine and well-tended are the carpets of grass, the floral borders that creep onto the lanai floor, the Chinese bamboo fronds with their evergreen blades.

Porta Verde showcases the lush tropics and villa living.

Color burst

Situated in Lumot, Cavinti, Laguna, the villa bursts with splashes of color, bold declarations that make it a prominent architectural landmark by the lake. Summer tones and shades are washed on the façade, on the finials tracing the balcony ledge, and on every building element that gleams with untamed shades of blue, green, salmon, orange and ochre. The colors and visual elements were animated with the design spirit of Ernest Santiago, a specialist in tropical furniture and accents. There is a willful direction toward highlighting the Filipino and Asian mix, an expression that is just rightfully established. From the main house, one views the estate from the terrace. A separate guesthouse is ensconced in its private slope, echoing the tropical theme. Two cabanas—delightful tropical gazebos—stand proud by the lake and poolside. Matching grace, aesthetics and function, the mixture of natural stones, layers of greens, concrete, glass and wood make a statement that more than whispers: this is a great site to hold an intimate gathering of family and friends, a weekend retreat or a private party.

Coupled with the presence of man-made lakes and the protected forest conservation area, the villa's best asset is its location—a promontory all to itself, with a commanding view of the Sierra Madre range and a grand sweep of clouds, mountains, trees and a placid lake. There are large and colorful birds that fly in regularly, nesting among the fruit trees below. You can certainly take walks in and outside the property, for the gentle soil and clean, fresh air can soothe the soul on a reflective hike or an active trek. The heated Jacuzzi beckons below, adjacent to the large swimming pool and a small one for the children. Activities abound aside from water sports. Lakeside fishing for *tilapia* or bass is an option for adults and children. Boating around the lake is a simple and refreshing ride. But while there will never be a lack for outdoor activities, the villa showcases itself much more as a perfect option for a restful weekend. Quiet and serene, Porta Verde lends silent brilliance to times of reflection.

Laguna base

The site itself is adjacent to many picturesque Laguna towns. Pagsanjan, Paete and Lumban are interesting places to discover on a weekend. Tours may also be arranged, all at your option. It is a veritable base when seeing this side of Laguna province.

Full-service spa facilities will soon be built in clusters by the lakeside, without impeding magnificent views. Picture yourself having a rejuvenating massage in a tropical cabana, a cool drink at hand. There are other amenities and five-star conveniences such as microwave ovens, a complete cooking set, refrigerator, coffee maker and a whole complement of tableware. Staff members are on hand to attend to the needs of the guests.

The entire experience of living in a tropical villa is completed with the rustic touches that define the ambient setting. The Filipino touch is highlighted along with little nuances of Balinese and Thai elements. Ernest, ever the meticulous stylist, provided most of the furnishings with accessories that range from locally sourced Philippine antiques, earthenware, abaca hung leaves and colored pillows in variegated hues. The sculptural finials on the ledge are from a concrete pattern that Ernest crafted himself. Rough-hewn posts in *molave* are from old houses. The bars and steps in *traviesa* (railroad wood) are similarly old *molave*. To ward off mosquitoes, optional screen frames may be pulled out from the sliding tracks.

To highlight Laguna crafts, the stately bamboo beds, comfortable and low in height, are examples of quality crafts from Sta. Cruz, Laguna. Five-star rated cushions and mattresses combine to induce restful slumber. Floral arrangements in every corner are taken from the garden behind the main house.

Shooting stars at night and rainbows with perfect arches are just some of the bonus views that complete the total Porta Verde experience. Up in the mountains, on the south of Caliraya Lake, bordered by water, trees and sky, is Porta Verde—a celebration of graciousness in tropical living.

Call Porta Verde at 842-3671 or 807-8414; fax 809-1363 or e-mail ihc—801@mozcom.com. Visit www.lakeside-farms.com

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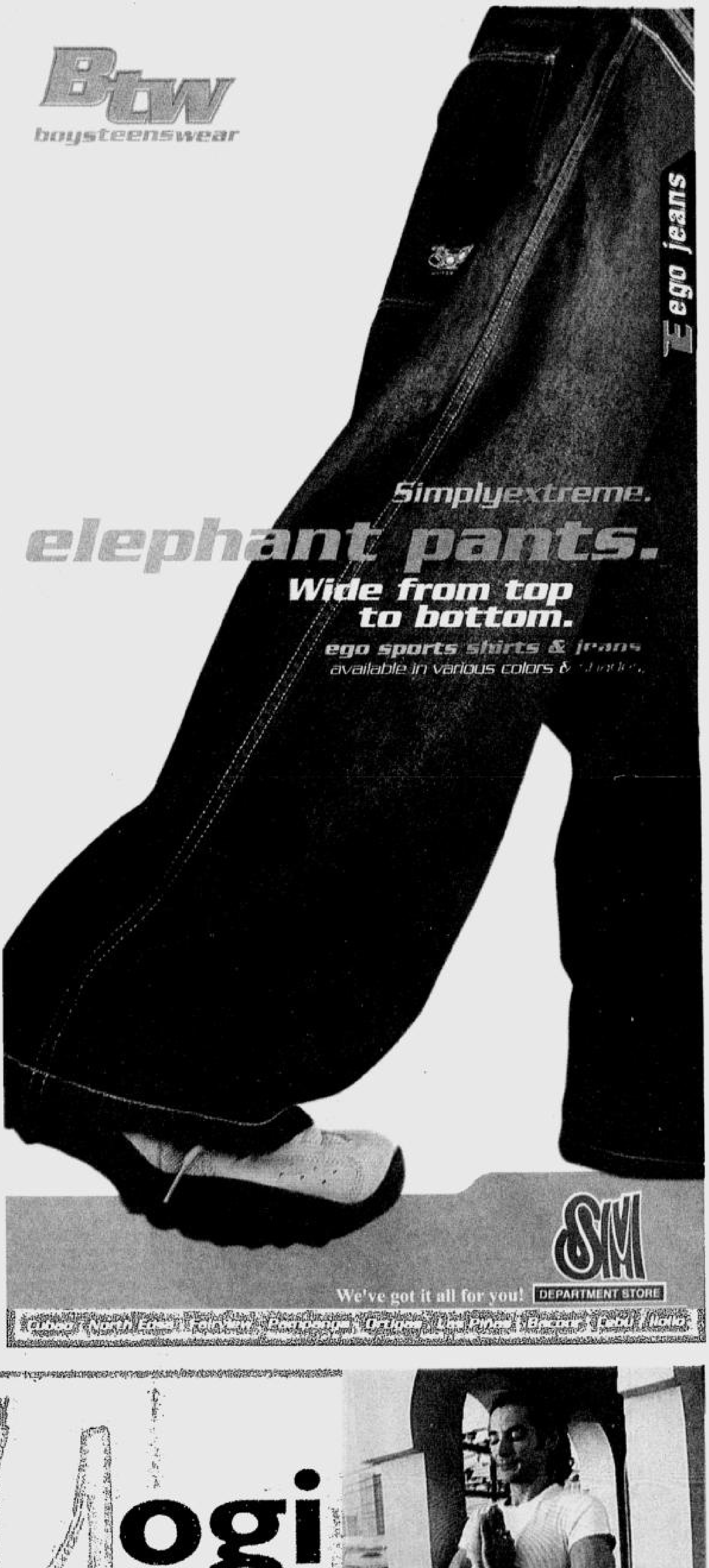
GATEWAY/ p.F6



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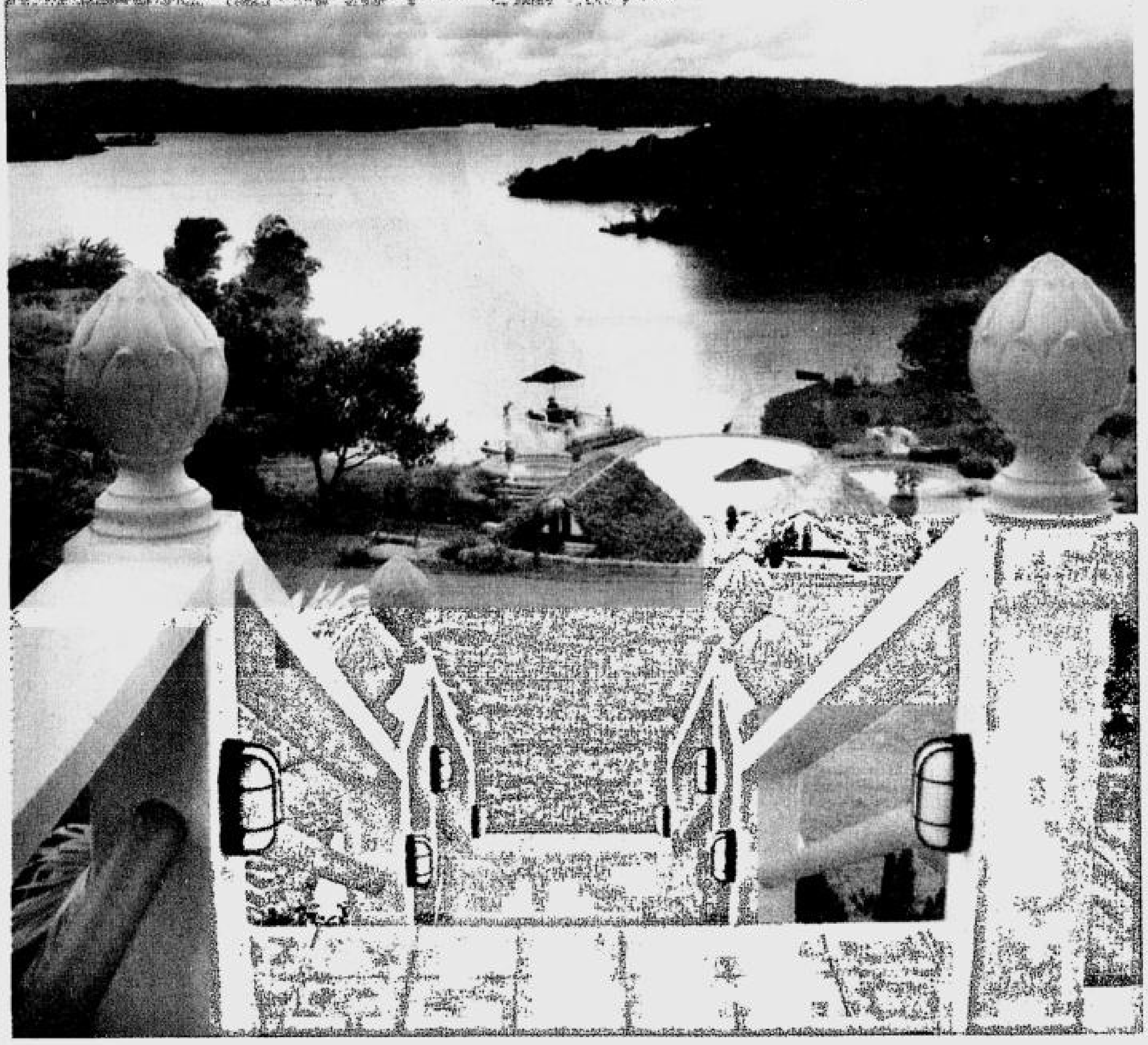
THE WINDOWS are angled, in classic tropical profiles. An outdoor bench in *molave* wood gracefully traces the space between two trees.

THE SUITE on the ground floor is decked with a variety of bed sizes, with bay windows fitted with day beds excellently-arranged for lazy afternoon siestas. Clay-tiled flooring matches the old Filipino furniture in *molave* and narra wood.

Gateway
to greenery



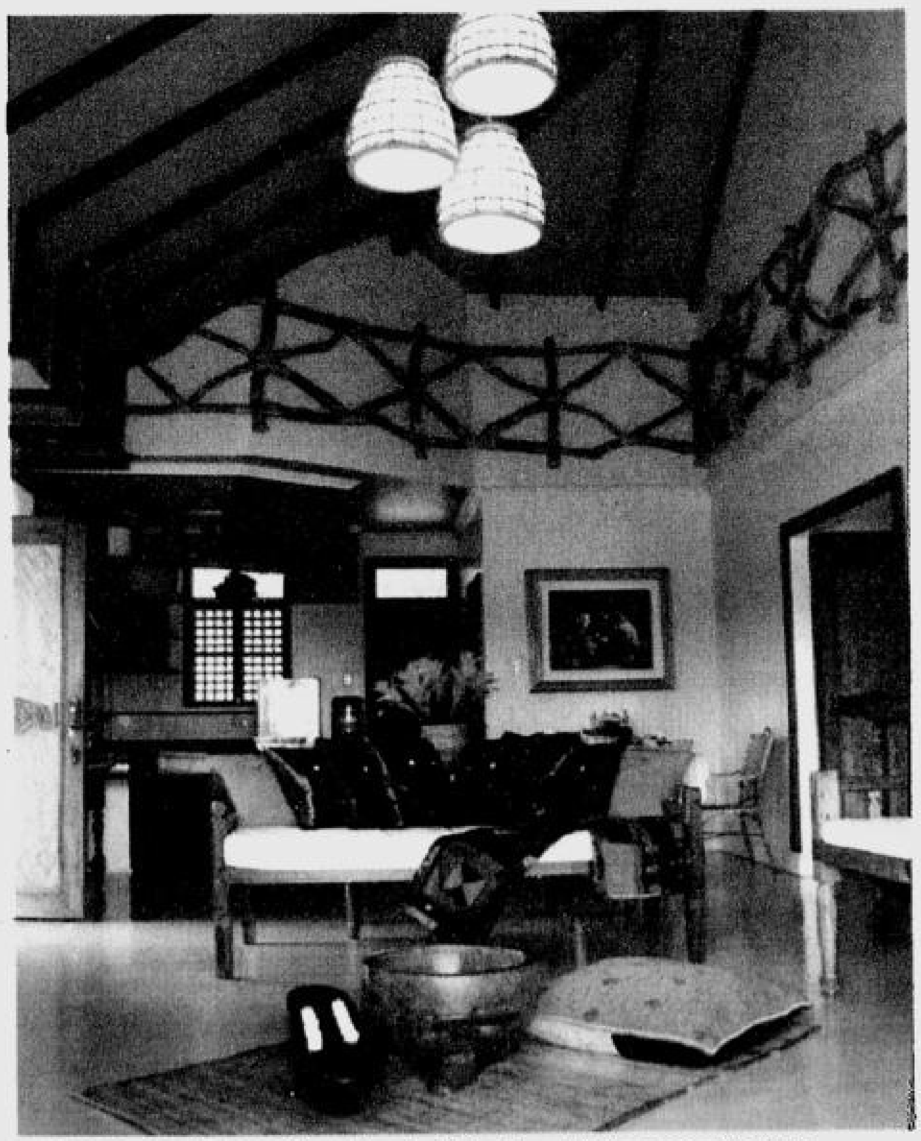
THE STEPS leading to the poolside and lakeshore are decorated with fixed concrete finials, softening the vertical lines and architectural massing. The view beyond is truly magnificent, with sensuous terrain and verdant hills merging with the lake and the sky.

GRACEFUL motions are outlined in the old tree branch dried and preserved as a faux support column by the kitchenette, where amenities are complete—microwave oven, toaster, coffeemaker, water dispenser and a wooden slatted china cabinet. Dried abaca leaves form a spray on clay jars.

THE MAGIC of tropical dining is alive with freshly squeezed fruit juices, newly picked flowers and an assortment of bamboo and wooden accessories.

With a commanding view of Lake Caliraya, Porta Verde is tropical living at its best

A SEPARATE guest suite is more private, located just a short walk from the main villa. It is trellis-lined, with a garden all around it. Here, two antique *narra* chairs share veranda space with an old *molave* outdoor table in rustic style.



ELEMENTS of Philippine folk art blend with Southeast Asian accessories from Bangkok and Bali. A carved *sungka* board holds a coterie of candles on the mat.

Art raffle for young scholars

WORKS of several famous Filipino artists will be raffled off at the Avellana Art Gallery on March 23. Among the artists are Mauro Malang Santos, Ang Kiukok, Danny Dalena, Claude Tayag, Alan and Ivi Cosio, Lao Lianbien, Dan Raralio, Hermes Alegre, Rachy Cuna, Jeanne Tan, Impy Pilapil, John and Tessie Pettyjohn, Florencio Concepcion and Soler Santos.

Each ticket holder is assured of going home with an art piece. Some lucky participants will even win artwork of higher value than others.

The raffle is an undertaking of the St. Theresa's College Manila High School '78 Foundation to mark the silver jubilee of the class next year. Out of the proceeds, the organizers will create an endowment fund for a scholarship that will cover from elementary to high school.

There are two categories of artworks, with ticket prices at P10,000 or P20,000.

Screening the artwork for the raffle will be Alberto Juan Avellana, an art expert, who acts as the project curator.

The Avellina Gallery is located at 220 Fresno Road, Pasay City. The raffle will be held at 5-7 p.m. Cocktails will be served.

Reservations will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Call Dr. Jocelyn Tan at 890-2824.

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A total mining ban in Oriental Mindoro?

Last of two parts

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

ACCORDING to Andy Torres, chief geologist of Crew Minerals (Phil.) Inc., there are at least five reasons the Minerals Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) was cancelled by the DENR in July last year. The MPSA was entered into by the Philippine government and Aglubang Mining/Crew Minerals (subsidiary of the Crew Development Corp.) on January 2000, which gave the company exclusive rights to mine a defined area in Oriental Mindoro for a period of 25 years. The company could have explained their side of the issues presented if only they were given a chance to. On our request, and in the interest of the environment which is our primary concern here, he hastens to answer those reasons point by point. The DENR is welcome to react to them.

First reason: The project is situated on an active fault line which makes it dangerous to build any structure there.

Reply: Even if a fault line does exist in the area, the problem can be solved by expert technology available for the purpose. Examples of places that thrive despite fault lines: Marikina, which has many houses and structures standing despite their location. Philex Mining in Baguio is on a fault line but it's still operating. In the San Andreass Fault in California, structures are able to withstand tremors because the right technology has been applied. But the thing is, the project site itself is not within a fault line.

Second: Exploration of project is within the watershed area of Victoria.

Reply: From records on forests of the Bureau of Lands, the project site has not been declared a watershed. Though forests are usually important watersheds, in this case, the project site is not even in the list of proposed watersheds. In the first place, if it had been so, Aglubang-Crew would not have been given a permit to start exploration.

The exploration area covers only about 30 percent (or 2,700+ hectares) of the total 9,720 hectares. Exploratory activities had not even been finished when the MPSA was cancelled. A feasibility study would have followed the exploration to determine if there were enough nickel deposits to make the project viable. But even before starting the study, they were told to stop.

If the study proved favorable, the company would have made sure the environment was well protected. As it is, reforestation had already began even if the feasibility study had not. Already, about 20 km of trees have been planted in denuded areas. These facts would have shown in a feasibility study if they had been given the time to make it.

Third: Mining will worsen problems of siltation and flooding in the area.

Reply: Those problems already exist and have not been caused by Aglubang-Crew's mining activities. It is precisely for those same reasons that the precious minerals in the province should be extracted and saved before they are lost forever.

It should also be noted that siltation and flooding are natural outcomes of age. A few places in the country, Mindoro and Palawan, among them, are ancient sites... about 300 million years old. The oldest rock in the world is said to be found in Mindoro. Age tends to flatten land, causing siltation and flooding.

Fourth: The project is not socially acceptable, that is, the greater number of people do not want it.

Reply: Under the Mining Act, social acceptability must come from the host community, in this case, Victoria. And when you get 28 out of 32 barangays supporting the project, is that not social acceptability? Even indigenous people like the Mangyans stand to benefit from the project.

Fifth: The deposits are not enough for full-scale mining.

Reply: How can it be said they are not enough for mining when the company was not given a chance to make a feasibility study that would have showed it? The study would have shown, for example, that 72 million tons of nickel-cobalt deposits have already been measured. With just that amount, mining operations can go on for 20-25 years, with possible extension after exploration is finished. This would open economic opportunities for the people involved, and even the entire country.

Moreover, mining for nickel-cobalt is a world-class operation, the first of its kind here.

* * *

From all of these, does it look like Aglubang-Crew is out to ruin the environment? Or are we missing out on a big opportunity to enhance it and the quality of life of Victoria and possibly all of Oriental Mindoro?

The least that can be done is to reevaluate the project. Have knowledgeable, technical people take an objective view of the issues. Rushing into uncertain accusations doesn't seem to be the right course to take on anything.

Three-day Lenten retreats scheduled

LENTEN meditation retreats will be held on March 28-30, 8:30-11:30 a.m., at the Brahma Kumaris Centers, 7485 Bagtikan corner Dao St., Makati City (tel. 890-7960, telefax 890-7906); 34 Gener corner Kamuning Road, QC (tel. 922-9231 or 414-9421); 3/F CDC Building, Maria Orosa Street, Ermita, Manila (tel. 521-2015 or 524-3489); and 55 First Road, Quezon Hill, Baguio City (tel. 445-5935).

Appliance sale

ABENSON, with Citibank, brings "Appliance Quest 2002" on March 15-31 at the Padre Faura Wing, 1/F Robinsons Place Ermita.

Use your Citibank credit card and grab the latest in home appliances and furniture. The Quest offers an unbelievable below 0-percent interest rate on selected items at the exhibit area through Citibank's Paylite Installment Plan, making the card price lower than the cash cost. Participating brands are Carrier, LG, Sony, JVC, Pioneer, Philips and Sanyo.

Fashion show launches new lifestyles area

GREENBELT Shopping Plaza inaugurates its new lifestyles area on March 22, 6 p.m., with an interactive concert cum fashion show at the cul-de-sac area (beside Chowking).

The show, dubbed "Ethnicity & the City," celebrates ethnicity and features GSP's interesting merchandise mix. Among those who will present their products are artist-singer Grace Nono, designer Dita Sandico-Ong, accompanied by live music from Grace and Bob Ave's group. A presentation by other boutiques in the mall will be accompanied by music from Brown Man Revival and DJ Manolet Dario.

Guests will be treated to an array of specialties by The Plaza Catering & Foodshoppe, plus food and drinks courtesy of Lady's Choice, Knorr and Lipton. Robbie Carmona directs.

Also exhibiting their products at the show are Amanda Griffin and Isabel Engwa of Tabu, Anna Cruz's Flirt, CX Clothes Express, Jon and Merle Tiongson of Novecento, Pit Mercado of Brand F, Tess Manimtim-Valdes of De Tour, Fluff, Bernice Palanca Go and Anna Joaquin of Fish and Things, and Riza Araneta and Itsy Macasaet of Chameleon.

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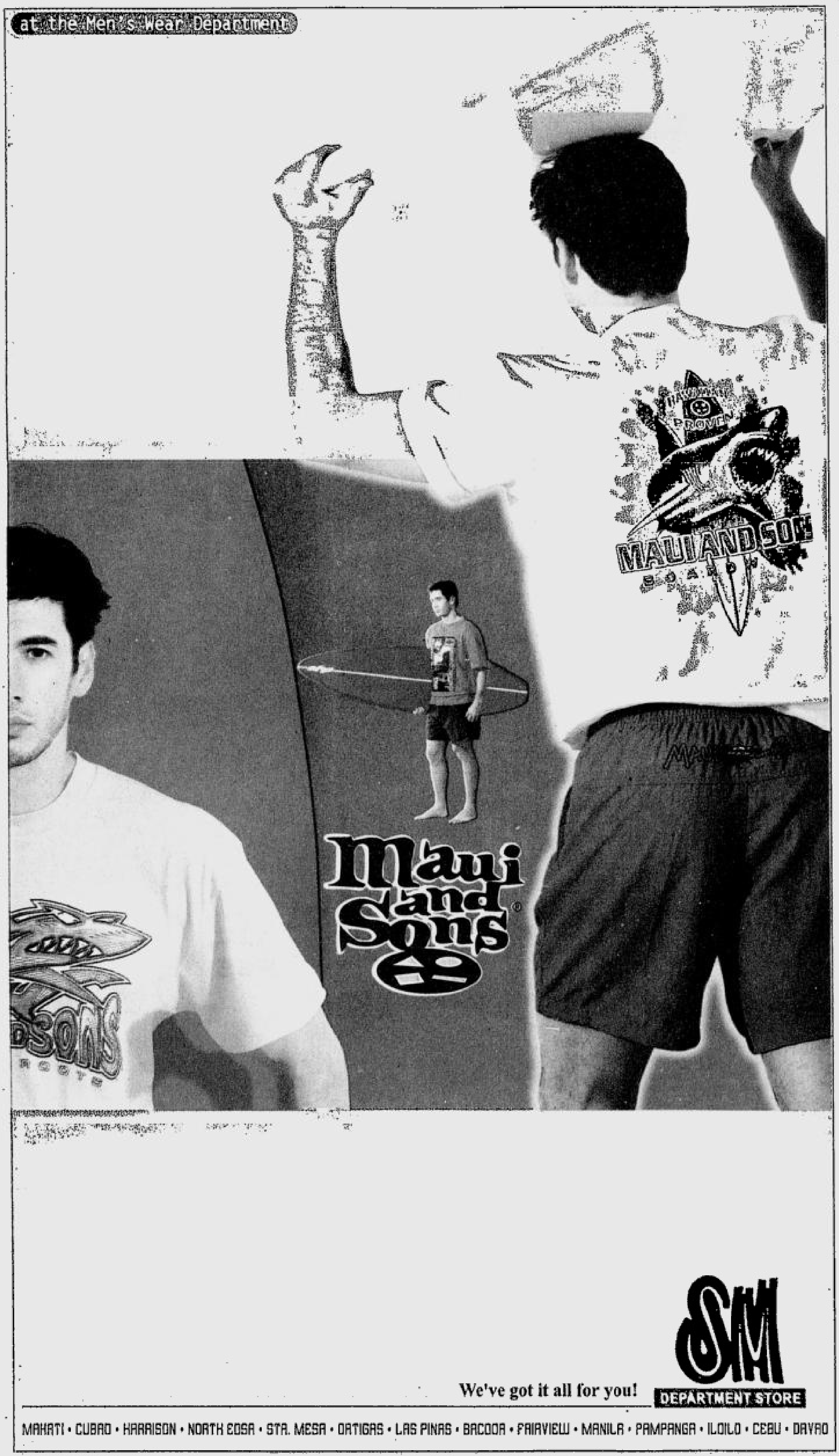
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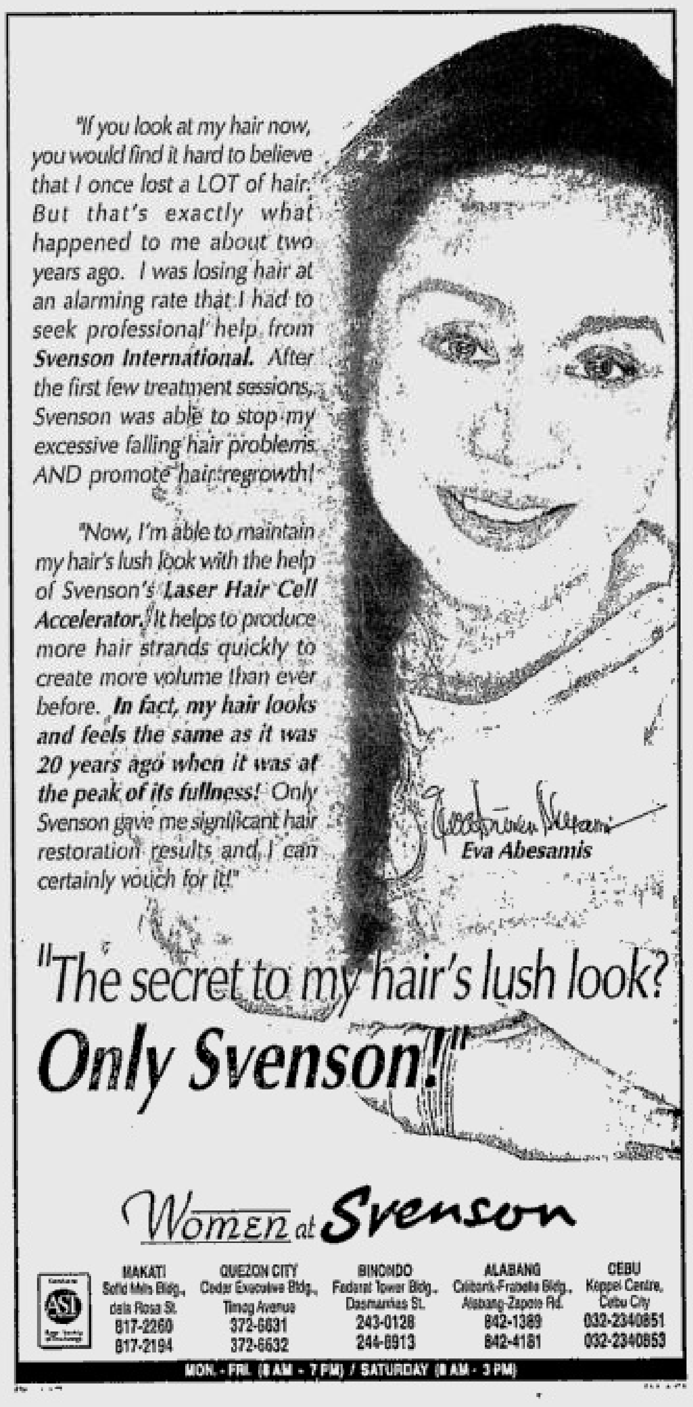
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